



Major R. S. Seton.

*No*

# Cornell University Library

BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME  
FROM THE  
SAGE ENDOWMENT FUND  
THE GIFT OF

**Henry W. Sage**

1891

*A 85169*

*26/8/95*

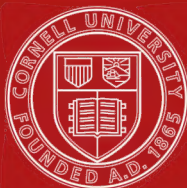
Cornell University Library  
**BR45 .B21 1805**

**View of the evidences of Christianity at**



**3 1924 029 180 649**

**olin**



## Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.













*A View of the Evidences of Christianity at the  
Close of the pretended Age of Reason:*

IN

**EIGHT SERMONS**

PREACHED BEFORE

**THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,**

*AT ST. MARY'S,*

**IN THE YEAR MDCCCV.**

AT

**THE LECTURE**

FOUNDED BY

**THE REV. JOHN BAMPTON, M. A.**

**CANON OF SALISBURY.**

---

**BY EDWARD NARES, M. A.**

**RECTOR OF BIDDENDEN, KENT, AND LATE FELLOW OF  
MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD.**

---

**OXFORD,**

**AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS FOR THE AUTHOR.**

**SOLD BY J. COOKE, OXFORD; BY MESSRS. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S  
CHURCH YARD; LONGMAN AND CO. PATERNOSTER ROW;**

**J. HATCHARD, PICCADILLY, LONDON; AND BY**

**J. DEIGHTON, CAMBRIDGE.**

**1805.**



IMPRIMATUR,

WHITTINGTON LONDON,

VICE-CAN. OXON.

*Die 30 Aug.*  
1805.

TO  
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF PORTLAND,  
CHANCELLOR ;  
TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN LORD ELDON,  
HIGH STEWARD ;  
TO  
THE REVEREND THE VICE-CHANCELLOR  
AND  
HEADS OF COLLEGES  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

(By whose Appointment the following Sermons were preached :)

TO THE WORSHIPFUL  
THE MAYOR  
AND CORPORATION OF OXFORD,  
IN TOKEN OF RESPECT AND VENERATION FOR THE CHIEF MAGISTRATES  
OF A CITY, WHICH HIS FATHER HAD LONG THE HONOUR OF  
REPRESENTING IN PARLIAMENT,

THIS VOLUME  
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND MOST GRATEFULLY  
INSCRIBED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT  
AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

EDWARD NARES.





# EXTRACT

FROM THE

## LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,

CANON OF SALISBURY.

——“I give and bequeath my Lands and  
“Eftates to the Chancellor, Mafters, and Scholars  
“of the Univerfity of Oxford for ever, to have  
“and to hold all and fingular the faid Lands or  
“Eftates upon truſt, and to the intents and pur-  
“poſes hereinafter mentioned; that is to ſay, I  
“will and appoint that the Vice-Chancellor of  
“the Univerfity of Oxford for the time being ſhall  
“take and receive all the rents, iſſues, and pro-  
“fits thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations, and  
“neceſſary deductions made) that he pay all the  
“remainder to the endowment of eight Divinity  
“Lecture Sermons, to be eſtabliſhed for ever in  
“the ſaid Univerfity, and to be performed in the  
“manner following :

“I direct and appoint, that, upon the firſt  
“Tueſday in Eaſter Term, a Lecturer be yearly  
“choſen

“ chosen by the Heads of Colleges only, and by  
 “ no others, in the room adjoining to the Print-  
 “ ing-House, between the hours of ten in the  
 “ morning and two in the afternoon, to preach  
 “ eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year fol-  
 “ lowing, at St. Mary’s in Oxford, between the  
 “ commencement of the last month in Lent Term,  
 “ and the end of the third week in Act Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight Di-  
 “ vinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon  
 “ either of the following Subjects—to confirm  
 “ and establish the Christian Faith, and to con-  
 “ fute all heretics and schismatics—upon the di-  
 “ vine authority of the holy Scriptures—upon  
 “ the authority of the writings of the primitive  
 “ Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the pri-  
 “ mitive Church—upon the Divinity of our  
 “ Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Di-  
 “ vinity of the Holy Ghost—upon the Articles  
 “ of the Christian Faith, as comprehended in the  
 “ Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight  
 “ Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always  
 “ printed, within two months after they are  
 “ preached, and one copy shall be given to the  
 “ Chancellor of the University, and one copy to  
 “ the Head of every College, and one copy to the  
 “ Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one copy to  
 “ be put into the Bodleian Library ; and the ex-  
 “ pence

“ pence of printing them shall be paid out of the  
 “ revenue of the Land or Estates given for esta-  
 “ blishing the Divinity Lecture Sermons ; and  
 “ the Preacher shall not be paid, nor be entitled  
 “ to the revenue, before they are printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person  
 “ shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lec-  
 “ ture Sermons, unless he hath taken the Degree  
 “ of Master of Arts at least, in one of the two  
 “ Universities of Oxford or Cambridge; and that  
 “ the same person shall never preach the Divi-  
 “ nity Lecture Sermons twice.”





---

## CONTENTS.

---

### SERMON I.

ACTS v. 38, 39.

*And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : For if this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to nought :*

*But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.*

P. 1.

### SERMON II.

ACTS v. 38, 39.

*And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : For if this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to nought :*

*But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.*

P. 57.

## CONTENTS.

### SERMON III.

2 ESDRAS iv. 12.

*Then said I unto him, It were better that we were not at all, than that we should live still in wickedness, and to suffer, and not to know wherefore.* P. 105.

### SERMON IV.

ECCLESIASTICUS xv. 12.

*Say not thou, God hath caused me to err ; for he hath no need of the sinful man.* P. 153.

### SERMON V.

JEREMIAH vi. 16.

*Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: But they said, We will not walk therein.* P. 201.

### SERMON VI.

PSALM xc. 2.

*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made ; thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.* P. 275.

SERMON

## CONTENTS.

xi

### SERMON VII.

JUDE, ver. 10.

*But these speak evil of those things which  
they know not.* P. 355.

### SERMON VIII.

PSALM cxlvii. 19, 20.

*He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes  
and ordinances unto Israel.*

*He hath not dealt so with any nation; neither  
have the heathen knowledge of his laws.*

P. 445.

### SERMON IX.

TITUS ii. 15.

*These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke  
with all authority. Let no man despise  
thee.* P. 509.

## ERRATA.

- P. 62. l. 7. for *difference* read *indifference*  
— 79. l. 8. for *have a better* read *have had a better*  
— 137. l. 12 from the bottom, for *Viola* read *Voilà*  
— 208. l. last, for *not essential* read *most essential*  
— 220. l. 10. read *The second and third ages are of more than two millions of  
years;*  
— 374. l. 18. for *real manhood* read *mere manhood*  
— 421. l. 33. for *primus* read *fuius*



---

ACTS v. 38, 39.

*And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : For if this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to nought :*

*But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.*

IN this advice of Gamaliel there was, no doubt, much of prudence and good sense ; of equity and common justice it may be allowed to have had its share ; of reverence towards God it was not destitute ; but of good will to the cause of Christianity we may scarcely at all suspect it (<sup>1</sup>) : and yet no friend could have set Christianity in a more advantageous point of view, or have more properly put it upon the true footing of its own pretensions. It assumed to be “ of God (<sup>2</sup>),” and what is more remarkable, even when every sort of opposition and hostility was to be apprehended <sup>a</sup>, it assumed to be so secure, as to be above being overthrown not only by men, but by all the malice and stratagems of the powers of darkness (<sup>3</sup>). We are able to

<sup>a</sup> How much this strengthens the evidence for Christianity, see *Leslie's Works*, vol. ii. 163.

count the years that have elapsed since this cautious and wise advice was given ; and though we may not pretend to fix the term that Gamaliel might have in contemplation, as to the issue of the experiment ; yet we may, I think, be morally certain that he had no expectation that it would have maintained its ground, as it now has done, for more than eighteen centuries.

That it has continued so long, must not in itself be admitted as a demonstration of its truth. It is impossible to say how long it may please God, for particular ends, to suffer error to prevail. That great and high purposes may be answered by its existence, and continuance under certain circumstances, only the Infidel would doubt. It seems certainly to arise out of the nature and necessity of things ; the freedom of the human mind and human will depending on the possibility both of error and of vice.

The *mere duration* therefore of any religious system cannot prove it to be “ of God<sup>(4)</sup>,” unless it shall seem to have prevailed in *opposition to man*. For human error may in the course of time become so wilful and inveterate, as to delay the interposition of the Almighty

mighty to remove it, and to dispel the darkness of such infatuations. The blindness of the Jews is exactly cotemporary with Christianity itself. No argument is therefore even yet to be drawn, from the *mere continuance* of the Christian religion.

But though error may be suffered to prevail, where men are headstrong and obstinate in resisting the truth, and bent upon cherishing and upholding their own mistakes; yet, that any system, *assuming* to be “of God,” should maintain itself against every sort of *opposition* on the part of *man*, is a case widely different.

So many able, and I think unanswerable, works have been written to prove Christianity to be “of God,” that the subject seems exhausted; but still many of these arguments must needs rest on ground disputed by the Infidel (<sup>5</sup>); on miracles which he is disposed to deny (<sup>6</sup>); on testimony which he is determined to doubt; on the fulfilment of prophecies, the authority and application of which he is unwilling to admit. But another question may easily present itself to the inquisitive mind, and my text suggests it, namely, what would probably have been the fate of Christianity

at this time, had it been, as Gamaliel, in all likelihood, meant to insinuate, of *man* ?

There is no doubt but that every proof which can be brought forward, to shew it to have been “of God,” must at the same time tend to prove it to have been *not* of *man* : but there is still this difference between the two enquiries ; in the one we intend to demonstrate its inherent strength and validity ; in the other, we endeavour to prove, if I may so say, its *want* of *weakness*, or the absence of those things which would prove it human (7).

If the Revelation we adhere to be truly “of God,” it is, no doubt, proper to dwell on its high pretensions, and point out its divinity : but it is no less an object worthy of our consideration, to examine into the probable chances that have occurred, of its failure, had it been “of *man*.” When we advance against the Deist, the stupendous miracles accompanying its first establishment ; the unimpeachable character of the sacred writers ; the extraordinary and exact accomplishment of the prophecies foretelling the advent of Messiah ; it is evident that all these are in themselves subjects of doubt and disputation ;

tion; and before they can be admitted by the Deist to prove the divinity of our holy Religion, they must themselves be proved and demonstrated to the satisfaction of the unbeliever. But in shewing that had it been “ of *man*,” there is every possible reason to think it must have failed, as a mere human invention, we lay out of the question all the more immediate testimonies of its divinity, all those marks and characters which the Deist is disposed to controvert <sup>(8)</sup>, and we rest the whole argument on such demonstration as must make an impression on any ingenuous and discerning mind.

Had then Christianity been “ of *man*,” we may naturally conclude, from what has passed in the world since its first introduction, that it would before this have failed, either through some inherent defect, or from some outward opposition. I say from what has passed in the world since its first introduction, because on this will depend the whole question, as suggested by the advice of Gamaliel. Had Christianity been no object of notice, or subject of enquiry, to any but its own disciples, it might have endured just as long as it has done, whether founded in error

or in truth. It would have depended on the temper and disposition of those only who embraced it: but records of indisputable veracity tell us that it was from the first, and has been even to our days, as much an object of attention to its opponents, as to its friends and admirers. It has been in a state of very critical trial and probation from its very first appearance; it has been assailed by every weapon suited to such an attack; it has been persecuted by the violent, derided by the Infidel, spurned at by the wicked, misrepresented by the ignorant (°).

It would be endless and altogether useless to enumerate the different struggles it has had to make, (if we may so speak with due reverence,) since its first appearance. Any body at all acquainted with the history of the Church will easily call to mind what persecutions it has undergone, and what variety of opposition it has met with. It would be beyond my purpose to record mere facts; it would rather be my wish to examine into the spirit of these different attacks; to shew how earnestly every opposing principle among mankind has been set on work to overthrow it; and much surely its triumph over such multiplied  
assaults

assaults should serve to strengthen our confidence in its divine authority.

Had it been “ of *man*,” it must be admitted man might have overthrown it<sup>b</sup>: if man therefore has always been in some way or other in opposition to it, what power but that of God could have upheld it? I shall here however beg leave to connect Christianity with the Revelation to the Jewish nation, which preceded it. I shall beg leave to consider the *Old* and *New* Testaments as *inseparable*.

The opposition to these Revelations has been constant since the disobedience of our first parents; but previous to Christianity it consisted much in outward acts of violence, or idolatrous practices, and did not appear so much in the shape of objections to the revealed principles and doctrines, as in the adoption of contrary and erroneous systems of Religion.

The various oppositions we have to examine have both these characters; having appeared either in the shape of contradiction or competition; either in the form of objec-

<sup>b</sup> “ Tout ce qu’ont fait les hommes, les hommes peuvent le détruire.” *Roussseau, Emile.*

tions to the truths revealed, or as systems of a rival tendency. Before Christianity, other religions and other systems were embraced as distinct matters; when they came into competition with the true Religion, the latter was treated with open contempt; its merits and foundations were scarce at all, if ever, canvassed; and therefore God's truth, when vindication became necessary, was to be vindicated only by manifest and sensible interposition; open and conspicuous vengeance on his enemies and blasphemers (<sup>10</sup>). But since Christianity, Revelation has not only not been opposed, but has scarcely been so much as slighted or neglected, without some pretended excuse, insinuating either a want of authority, or some other great defect on the part of Revelation.

As the mode of attack has been altered, so of course has the mode of defence. God no longer visibly interposes, but having supplied Christians with the weapons proper for resisting all attacks on the part of man, he has abandoned it to our care and protection, with a full assurance that it shall not fail. While time can make no change in the Revelation committed to our charge, it  
is



is operating every possible change in the constitution of human affairs: multiplied experiments and accumulated stores of wisdom have greatly improved the condition of the human mind; imposture has every day less chance of making its way, while truth may at least have the advantage of a more satisfactory examination.

Revelation therefore, as it becomes every day more exposed, should obtain the greater credence, if it continues proof against such assaults: and it must be remarked, that Infidels themselves give ground and support to this triumph of Revelation, because in rejecting it as an object of superstition only, and vain fancies, they pretend to have made such advances in knowledge, as to see things more clearly, and to fathom them more deeply, than their predecessors. The advancement of human knowledge is assigned as the principal reason for rejecting such *errors*. A hope is also held out to us of still further improvement. But it will surely admit of a question, whether such improvement is wanting in particular points; or whether we have not ample reason to be satisfied with what has been already discovered; the very possibility of improvement depending on a  
thorough

thorough apprehension and acknowledgment of some defect. But this may be discussed hereafter ; at present let it be sufficient to admit to the fullest extent the great advancement of human knowledge, as that must certainly heighten the critical situation of the Jewish and Christian Revelations, if after all they are but human inventions.

Christianity was not confined to “ *a corner*” at its birth, nor is it disposed to take refuge in a corner now. It stands exposed to view, and to every assault on the part of the Infidel ; and the Infidel has indeed more vantage ground than he had ; for, if not entirely through the superior learning of the present age, yet through the great accumulation of learning transmitted to us, through ages past, as well as through the overthrow of almost all pagan superstitions, and irrational prejudices, he has every means of detecting its weak parts, or of inventing some system in opposition to it <sup>c</sup>.

Whatever weapon could be raised against imposition is at the Infidel’s command. There is learning enough in the world to detect errors, and wit enough to fabricate other

<sup>c</sup> See Sherlock’s IXth Discourse, pp. 264, 265.

systems, and better, if this be really defective. There *is*, and *has been* ; for indeed no mode of assault, I believe, remains untried : the heavy artillery of learning and criticism, as well as the lighter weapons of wit and ridicule have been repeatedly brought into the field. The effects they have had in each assault it is not my object to enquire. It is certain *they have not prevailed*. Revelation maintains its ground, not upheld by partial, prejudiced, or interested adherents, but ready to answer to every charge of error or inconsistency, and prepared to undergo any comparison with rival systems.

Nor is this said without reason : for though we would grant that Infidels have every advantage that the accumulated learning, and multiplied enquiries, of a long lapse of ages can give them, whereby they must needs be admirably qualified both to raise objections, and to dress up any new systems ; yet the benefits of such accumulated learning and curious enquiries being equally open to believers, believers are at least as well qualified to judge of the objections and systems of their opponents, as such opponents can be to judge of the grounds of *their* faith.

Nor

Nor is theology a science of so confined a nature, as that the Infidel may expect to attack Revelation with any weapon which the professed Theologian is unable to wield in its defence. Perhaps of all sciences none can afford topics for argument against Revelation, but the following: HISTORY, CRITICISM, ETHICS, PHYSICS, and METAPHYSICS; and there is not one of these, if we except *Physics*, of which the professed Theologian must not be a competent master. Of *History* he ought to know all that can in any way corroborate or confirm the historical records of the holy Scriptures; for a contradiction in facts and events would greatly invalidate its authority. In *Criticism* he should be well skilled: a false interpretation of the original writings, in which the word of God is conveyed down to us, being either a snare or a support to the unbeliever. Of *Ethics* he ought to know much, in order to be competent to judge of the internal evidence of a religion assuming to come from a God of infinite purity and perfection. And the same may be said of *Metaphysics*, which must serve to throw much light on the information there given us of spiritual beings and spiritual

ritual agency. *Physics*, though no indispensable object of study to the Theologian, must yet be too interesting in general to be entirely omitted: but as arguments of a peculiar nature have been drawn from this branch of science, more will be to be said upon it hereafter. We must however note here, that the Infidel can make no progress in this science, which is not attainable by the Theologian (""); and therefore, that the latter may be able to follow him wheresoever his objections may lead.

And perhaps in this instance the times are much altered: in former days, when, within the pale of the Church, controversies were carried on with all the parade and intricate formalities of the most subtle logic, it was the occupation of a man's whole life, to study the use of those cumbersome weapons<sup>d</sup>: besides that general knowledge at the same time was disregarded and even discountenanced, and they had other means of silencing all direct opposition to the holy Scriptures than those of argument and reply. But at present the Infidel may be sure of being met fairly

<sup>d</sup> "In illis temporibus ingeniosa res fuit esse Christianum."  
*Erasmus.*

in the field, and opposed with whatever weapons he may choose for conducting the attack. Believers are no longer to be despised as bigots; as prejudiced and partial advocates. There are numbers to be found capable of coping with the most subtle and the most acute on the side of infidelity; capable of examining as minutely and as largely into the merits of every point advanced against Revelation; as those on the other side can pretend to, in investigating the merits of the doctrines they oppose.

The supporters of Revelation desire nothing *more*, than fair enquiry, and diffusive argument. They wish Revelation to be examined in all its points and bearings (<sup>12</sup>); and let it be considered, that there are some points, in which if Revelation should be found deficient, it must be given up. If any history, or historical relics<sup>c</sup>, of *unquestionable authenticity*, should be found to contradict its records<sup>f</sup>: if nature, or natural effects and phænomena, should be found in positive opposition to the word of Scripture: if a

<sup>c</sup> See Minute Philosopher, p. 287. Dial. vi.

<sup>f</sup> Divine Legation of Moses, B. iv. §. 5.

*false* interpretation of the original writings should have been imposed upon the world as truth: if the moral precepts could be proved to be inconsistent with the undoubted attributes of God; or the notions of the Deity we find therein, absurd and irrational; then I know not how Revelation could be supported. It would be impossible not to acknowledge it to be “of *man*.”

But if, on the contrary, it should be found, that Revelation, taking its origin from the most remote periods, including in it much of historical fact, shall not, in regard to those facts, have been contradicted by *any* after-discovery, of *more* or *equally* authentic records: if the wide circle of the whole globe, not so much as the half of which was known, or had been traversed, when the sacred Books were written, has supplied no one undoubted historical testimony against them<sup>(13)</sup>: if Revelation, transmitted to us in a series of compositions of such a date as to be entirely prior to all those observations and experiments, which have laid open to us so many wonders in the natural world, shall be found to have conformed itself to the true system of nature; as far as common  
lan-

language would allow, and in no instance to have spoken in direct contradiction to the operations of nature: if the door has been studiously set open by the advocates of Revelation, for a close and critical examination of Holy Writ in its original languages, and no false interpretation is insisted upon: if all its moral precepts shall be found not only conformable to the purest dictates of reason and conscience, but to be so select in their nature, so clear in their enunciation, so practicable in their directions, so forcible in regard to their sanctions, that no human wisdom ever attained to such a system in any other instance: if its notions and representations of the Deity, and the world of spirits, the operations and nature of the human soul, shall be found either consonant; or far superior to all that has been discovered under the system of natural religion; then surely the issue of the enquiry *must be*, that such a scheme of Religion, such a connected chain of facts (<sup>14</sup>), such a system of precepts, must be “of GOD,” and of GOD ONLY!

Now, undoubtedly, much of this has been already amply proved and demonstrated. The question however will from day to day become



become more interesting, because, as it is the office and effect of *time* in general to overthrow all false opinions and unreasonable prejudices, so must it serve to confirm and establish truth.

In the lapse of ages there will be different periods, no doubt, more friendly than others to the development of truth, as well as periods more favourable to the prevalence of error and prejudice. During some ages, the human mind may be supine, indolent, and placed in adverse circumstances as to its expansion and its energies. At others, more favourable occasions will occur, in which it shall be in the way of every advantage conducive to the advancement of knowledge, and the consequent discovery of the most important truths. Such periods we may well trace in the revival of learning in Europe, and the glorious reformation of the Church.

We have recently passed a period of no small importance, though of a very questionable character. It has been ostentatiously indeed denominated the *Age* of REASON. I do not mean to allude only to the work of a single individual, distinguished by this title; but allowing him the credit of having ad-

opted a term admirably expressive not only of his own designs, but of that of many others who have made themselves conspicuous in the period I am alluding to, I propose to adopt it as a general title for that æra, in which Reason has been peculiarly opposed to Revelation (<sup>15</sup>), and, I think I may say, actual experiment made of its strength and its effects <sup>g</sup>.

A question naturally arises, How has Christianity passed through this period? Has Reason in *this* conflict got the better? Has she recommended herself so as to be henceforth solely relied on, to the exclusion of all pretended Revelations? Has she, in delivering man from the *rubbish* of *ancient prejudices* and *superstitions*, set him upon a sure footing; fortified his soul against every terror; cleared it of every doubt and perplexity; and given it either the enjoyment or certain hope of ease and happiness? Has she established a clear and *indisputable* rule of right, whereby a man may not only regulate his actions with prudence and decorum, but become a

<sup>g</sup>. See, as to the probable result, Professor Brown's Appendix to *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, 1798.

kind and good neighbour to all around him? Has Reason, in this her *first* appearance upon earth, (for so the assumed title would insinuate,) shewn herself superior to those *false* apparitions of her that *deceived* the world in *ancient* times? Has she done so much for us in this her own peculiar age, as to enable us not only to discard Revelation with contempt, but to see the emptiness of those vain pretenders of former days, who, assuming her name, sought to enlighten the world in the same bold manner, and to release it from the bondage of error and darkness?

If she shall be found to have done *this* for the world, let it *be* HER age! If she has appeared *superior to Christianity*, more divine, more encouraging, more salutary in her doctrines and precepts, let us not live any longer in error, let us hail her as she deserves: let us fall prostrate at her feet, as a messenger of *better tidings* than the *Gospel* of Christ has proclaimed must needs demand every testimony of regard and gratitude! (<sup>16</sup>).

We have, I conceive, no need to enquire, whether the author, from whom we more particularly derive the title of the *Age* of

*Reason*, was sincere in calling it so, with reference to other discoveries besides his own: it is enough to be certain that *he at least* apprehended, from the general complexion of things, that such a happy period was just then arrived; and if we examine into the circumstances of those particular times, we cannot fail to be satisfied, that a correspondent spirit prevailed throughout the whole continent of Europe ('').

Reason had at that time certainly a large confederacy of chosen troops, all bent upon the same object, all building on the same hopes, all equally confident of success against their devoted opponents, the advocates for Revelation, the friends of social order and regular government. All ancient opinions were declared to be prejudices, and a war of extermination denounced against them. Reason could expect no period of greater advantage for the trial of her strength, and advancement of her cause. It matters little whether the most has been made of these advantages; *it is enough to know that she has supposed herself strong enough to combat ancient prejudices with effect*; that she has at least been sensible of her own command over  
*such*

*such* weapons as *she* thought to be *sufficient* for the overthrow of the strong holds she meant to carry by assault. If it shall turn out that she has used these weapons amiss, or thought herself strong when in fact she was weak, it will not alter the case; we may yet be able to judge of those arguments, which have *appeared* to *her* to give her the victory (<sup>18</sup>). She must be left to be her own judge as to their sufficiency, when she *claims* the victory; it is ours to judge whether she has deceived herself or not.

*Formerly* Reason might seem to have had a hard task to vindicate her own supremacy in matters of judgment, for she was too rashly refused *all sort* of *interference*: but of late she has been invited to interfere (<sup>19</sup>); she has been respectfully appealed to; she has had every right and pretension, to which she could fairly lay claim, adjudged to her (<sup>20</sup>.) If she would presume beyond her fair and reasonable claims, her right to judge must needs be questioned and examined. To submit to human reason without just grounds, to appeal to her where she can have no pretensions to pass a judgment, would necessarily be to submit, and to ap-  
c 3 peal,

peal, *without* Reason. It would be submitting, and appealing, and rebelling against her decrees at the same time.

And surely Reason *must* acknowledge *some* things to be so above comprehension, as to be past her judgment. To make her the sole judge in such matters, would therefore be to act in contradiction to her own sense of right and authority. It must always, therefore, be the part of a wise man, to be cautious how far he submits himself to those who pretend to instruct him in the judgments and *decisions* of human Reason; for many may exceed their commission.

What human Reason may *approve*, and *assent* to, it must always be of importance to us to know; but it *cannot be*, that no truths can exist independent of human Reason. Unless we believe in the wild notion of the eternity of the world, and all things in it, we *must* suppose, that before there was any such faculty as human Reason, many things must have been brought into existence; many things even peculiarly adapted to the use of man, and which, therefore, we might well suppose, if any necessity could exist for the *consent* of human Reason, would

at

at least have been rendered plain and intelligible to the understanding of man. But is this so? Does the sun shine by our consent, or spread abroad his rays in a way familiar and evident to our apprehension? Is man's *own body* exactly what he would wish and desire? Would he not have contrived so as to have had it last longer than it usually does, and free from all those ills and infirmities, to which it is now liable? Would he not have reserved to himself a right to *inspect those nice and delicate organs of life and motion*, on which his very existence seems so much to depend, instead of *shutting them entirely out* from his *own* observation and management; as is now evidently the case with regard to the human frame?

This is not said with a view to depreciate Reason: it is a high and most distinguishing faculty; but yet it would certainly appear, that how much soever we may be to depend on it as a directing faculty, it was not bestowed upon us in any *unlimited* degree. Man was *meant to be left in ignorance* (<sup>21</sup>), as to many points; of which there cannot, I think, be a stronger proof, than in the very instance I have adduced, the *peculiar con-*

*trivance of the human frame ; the internal parts especially ; which, till anatomical observations had multiplied greatly, must have been wholly unknown to us, though all our vital functions depended on those concealed organs : and after all, we can only reason from analogy ; the internal constitution of a living being none can examine into.*

Many other instances might certainly be brought forward, to shew that, in certain cases, man's Reason, however it might be left free to speculate upon such matters, was not originally *meant to be made the judge*, or even *permitted to interfere*. Man is fairly *shut out* from his own observations in regard to the most essential functions of his bodily frame : if he has a greater natural insight into his spiritual condition, it is repugnant to analogy ; and the history of the world affords no proof of such a thing.

So far from man being better acquainted with the modes, circumstances, and condition of his future life, he cannot know naturally whether his soul is to survive the decay and dissolution of his present bodily organs. Can it admit of a question, whether Reason was superadded to the other faculties man has  
in



in common with brutes, in order to inform him of his superior and peculiar destination? Certainly man cannot know more of what is to become of him hereafter, by any application of his Reason, than the brute that we suppose will perish, *as to the actual certainty of the matter* (<sup>22</sup>): Reason may support conjecture so far as to raise in man the utmost expectation of a future life <sup>h</sup>, and therefore, one would think, should induce him to expect also, that he should be supernaturally informed of it, and supernaturally instructed in the terms and conditions leading thereto. And this is enough for man. The moment Reason has carried him far enough to induce him to conjecture that he has an interest in a future state, in a world distinct from this, he may naturally expect some mode of intercourse will be kept open.

Reason seems to be the same in man with that *capacity of improvement* pointed out by a celebrated writer <sup>i</sup>, as the distinguishing characteristic of our class of being. But a capacity of improvement in man, *as man*, must

<sup>h</sup> See Butler's Analogy, chap. i.

<sup>i</sup> *Rousséau*. See his tract on the Origin of the Inequality of Man.

needs be limited; *man* could never attain to the perfections of an *angel* in *this* stage of his being. All beyond what his senses inform him of, or Revelation expressly discloses to him, can amount to no more than conjecture.

I would not *depreciate* Reason, as the writer just alluded to seems to have done; I cannot regard it as a faculty “only of use to “exalt the individual at the expence of the “species;” I consider it as a *noble*, a *glorious* faculty; capable of leading us to such a knowledge and judgment of the things around us, as both to amend our condition here, and fit us to anticipate the enlargement of our faculties in a superior state of being. No faculty could be more suited to give us the consoling hope of a progressive state of improvement hereafter, being certainly competent to raise our notions at least above this sublunary state, though incapable at present of actually penetrating, of itself, the veil that conceals from us the regions above. Reason has its origin as it were in heaven, being fitted already probably for the full fruition of it, when supplied with senses suitable; or rather when so entirely spiritualised as to comprehend

comprehend by intuition, what it can now only behold, as *through a glass darkly* (<sup>23</sup>).

The limits, within which human Reason is at present confined, are surely capable of being clearly ascertained. And I should not be very unwilling to allow, that so far we might conceive the age of Reason to *be* arrived, that indeed Reason has now every aid at command, that it could desire or expect. Except the barrier obviously interposed between this world and the next, it is able to cope with almost every difficulty in the investigation of truth. I cannot conceive that much in the line of *History* remains to be discovered. I cannot conceive that *Criticism* can be carried further than it has been. I do not think *Metaphysics* is likely to be applied with greater effect than it has been, to the curious, but too often unsatisfactory, objects of its enquiry. *Ethics* can scarce be better understood than they already are in theory, however in practice men fail of acting up to the standard they should govern themselves by. And even in *Physics*, I apprehend, so far from advancing nearer to the truth of matters by further experiments, we run a chance only of convincing ourselves more and more of our  
own

own ignorance, it being impossible to know any thing determinate of many *past* transactions.

But if Reason be natural, and not altogether an *acquisition*, as one writer of this age of Reason would maintain<sup>k</sup>; it yet should, in the present state of the world, when it sets up for a judge, be assisted by all the acquired knowledge possible. Reason has no right to act peremptorily of herself, in opposition to Revelation, without being competent to examine and to judge of every pretension Revelation hath to urge. It is indeed difficult now to say how it would be *possible* for Reason to act of herself, and wholly unassisted. Every book that is written is the judgment of some man's Reason on some given point: none therefore but a *perfectly illiterate* person can be expected to argue upon the mere principle of his *own unassisted* Reason. When such stores of wisdom are accumulated, as is now the case, the *age* of REASON cannot be an age when Reason is to act without regard to these intellectual treasures (<sup>24</sup>); but when Reason shall be so far enlightened as to be

<sup>k</sup> See *Roussseau's Letter to the Archbishop of Paris. Miscell. vol. iii.*  
competent

competent to judge of every thing that has been added by man in the way of invention or discovery; when Reason shall be so informed, as to be in many instances incapable of being deceived; when it neither can be blinded by art, nor is any longer silenced by persecution; when it is both *able* to judge, and *may* do so: but above all, when it knows its own powers, and grasps at nothing beyond its reach.



## NOTES TO SERMON I.

---

Page 1. note (1).

“NON certe quod Evangelio faveret, sed quod “homo esset moderatus.” *Beza*. Dr. Doddridge however justly observes, Gamaliel could not be very moderate, if he was the author of the prayer against the Christians, used in the Jewish synagogues, as is reported of him. Gamaliel, besides all other prejudices, might, from particular circumstances, have been influenced against Christianity by a family pride and jealousy: see *Jenkins’s Reasonableness of Christianity*, vol. ii. 503. The edict of Antoninus in favour of the Christians, addressed to the states of Asia, has much the same sentiment, recommending moderation, and casting the care and defence of idolatry on the *Gods* themselves; intimating also, that the Christians would never be driven by force to forsake the worship of the *eternal God*, in whom they trusted. Vid. *Justin Martyr. Apol. ad Ant.*

Page 1. note (2).

*It assumed to be “of GOD.”*] That it assumed to be from *Heaven*, is another thing. This is the pretence of *all* religions: but of *Christianity* it may be said, that it assumes to be a Revelation from that *very God* whom the *Deist* is willing to acknowledge, a God too pure and too good to suffer us to be deceived in *his name*. See *Jenkins’s Reasonableness*, &c. part iv. chap. 2.

Page 1. note (3).

“Fundamenti loco ponatur perire non posse funditus Ecclesiam Christianam, nunquam extinctam iri in terris. Nunquam reviviscet et dominabitur *Paganismus* aut *Judaismus*; nunquam prævalebit Lex Mohometis, aut alia quæcunque, per totum terrarum orbem,

bem, *extincto Evangelio, et Religionis Christianæ professione.* Hoc certum ratumque ex verbis Christi. Sed qui promisit se conservaturum incorruptam; incorruptam dico aut doctrina aut moribus; quinimo nos moment eadem oracula sacra futurorum scandalorum, Apostasiæ futuræ, Antichristi futuri." *Burnet de Fide et Officiis Christianorum*, c. ix.

Page 2. note (4).

*The mere duration of any system cannot prove it to be "of God."*] See *White's second Bampton Lecture.* "Religionis autoritas non est tempore æstimanda, sed *Nunc mine, nec colere qua die, sed quid cœperis, convenit intueri.*" *Arnobius contr. Gentes.*—It is well known that the *Pagans* pleaded prescription in favour of their tenets against the Christians; the *Catholics* against the first Reformers, &c. see *Bayle sur les Cometes.* Bishop Law, in his discourses on the *Theory of Religion*, concludes that both *Popery* and *Mahometanism* will be found to have accomplished some wise and good ends.

Page 3. note (5).

*Many of these arguments must needs rest on ground disputed by the Infidel.*] "Omittamus sane testimonia Prophetarum," says Lactantius, lib. i. c. 5. "ne minus idonea probatio videatur ab his, quibus omnino non creditur;" and he blames Cyprian for having done the contrary, lib. v. c. 4. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cateches.* xviii.) advises the not arguing out of the Scriptures against those who do not acknowledge them. "Τοῖς μὲν οὖν κέχρησο λόγοις πρὸς Ἑλλήνας· τοῖς γὰρ τὰ ἐγγραφα μὴ παραδεχομένοις, αἵραφοῖς μάχου τοῖς ὅπλοις ἐκ λογισμῶν μόνον καὶ ἀποδείξεων." Mr. Gibbon wishes the apologists had been discreet enough to have acted exactly as Lactantius professes to do, and as Cyril recommends in the passages cited. Not that we would grant to Mr. Gibbon, that the evidence from *prophecy* ought to be kept out of sight, in arguing with Deists and Infidels. A *prophecy*, the precise date of which is ascertainable, and the accomplishment *certain* and *circumstantial*, affords an appeal applicable to every mind.



## Page 3. note (6).

On miracles which he is disposed to deny.] Rousseau in his Letters from the Mountains, written in defence of his *Emile*, asserts, that not only miracles are no adequate proof in themselves of a divine mission, it being impossible, from our imperfect knowledge of nature, and from the surprising deceptions of magic and artifice, to know what are truly miracles; but that our Saviour never insisted upon his own miracles as any proof of his mission. But we may safely assure ourselves, that St. John thought otherwise; see chap. xv. 24; and that Grotius so understood him, whose comment upon the words *Εἰ τὰ ἔργα μὴ ἐποίησα*, is as follows; that *besides* the doctrine which he preached, (and which Rousseau would have to be the *only* adequate proof of his mission,) “*Alterum* adfert “argumentum, quo adversarii reddantur inexcusabiles: “*MIRACULA SUA!*” See also John x. 37, 38. xiv. 11. Matth. xi. 4, 5. Luke vii. 22. and *Bishop Gibson's First Pastoral Letter*, pp. 37, 38. *Encbirid. Theolog.* The author of *Christianity not founded on Argument* asserts also, that our Lord could have no such meaning as to convince by his miraculous works; no such intention as to prove his own truth and *character* by these instances of his power; in *full contradiction*, says Bishop Law, in his *Theory of Religion*, to those many passages, where he *expressly* appeals to his works, as *direct proofs* of his commission. Dr. Morgan, in his *Moral Philosopher*, pretended also that Christ made no appeal to his miracles. See *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, Letter X. As to Rousseau's pretence, that miracles must be inadequate proofs, from the imperfection of our knowledge of natural causes and effects, Mr. Leslie had long ago replied to this objection in his admirable *Method with the Jews*; where he shews, that though we may not always know when we are cheated, yet we can certainly tell, in many cases, when we are *not* cheated; as in the case of the three Jews cast into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. For “though we cannot tell all the whole nature of fire, yet this we certainly must know, that it is of the nature of fire to “burn.” And this is applicable, as he further shews, to many, if not to all, the miracles of the Scriptures.

Rousseau will not admit that he *denies* the miracles related in the New Testament; but that he should have been *better satisfied*, if, instead of a lame person being enabled to walk, one had been made to walk that had no legs; or, instead of a paralytic being made to move his arm, a man with but one arm should suddenly have had two. But surely the miracle of the *loaves and fishes* was of this kind, and this very miracle Rousseau mentions with becoming respect. I shall have more to say on the subject of miracles elsewhere.

*Page 4. note (7).*

There is also this difference between the two enquiries: to prove Christianity to be "of God," we must be in a great degree confined to the immediate testimonies cotemporary with its first promulgation, or depending thereon: but to prove it *not to be* "of man," we may refer to every thing relating thereto in the *history of the world*, from its first creation to the present time.

*Page 5. note (8).*

*We lay out of the question all those marks and characters which the Deist is disposed to controvert.]* This is the admirable plan of Bishop Butler, as he explains it himself. "I have argued," he says, "upon the principles of others, not my own;" meaning hereby, not the proving any thing *from* their principles, but *notwithstanding* them: "and therefore," he adds, "I have omitted what I think true, and of the utmost importance, because by *others* thought unintelligible, and not true." *Analogy*, Part II. ch. viii. 418. and note.

*Page 6. note (9).*

Of the many unfair and unreasonable attacks Christianity has had to encounter, see an account in *Archdeacon Paley's Principles of moral and political Philosophy*, Book V. chap. ix.

"It is a convincing argument for the truth of the Christian Religion, and that it stands upon a most sure basis, that none have ever yet been able to prove it false, though there have been many men of all sorts, many fine wits, and men of great learning, that have spent themselves and ransacked the world for argument

“ment against it, and this for many ages.” *President Edwards’s Miscell. Observations.*

Lord Shaftesbury is very unwilling to admit that we have a fair account of some of the early opponents of Christianity, *Misc. v. c. 3.* See however what is said of Origen in *Jenkin’s Reasonableness of Christianity*, vol. ii. 522. and the whole of that chapter, where he shews that the arguments of the opponents of Christianity were generally all answered before their works were lost. It has been said also, that the Christians destroyed many works of their opponents; yet many certainly remain, and were preserved by Christians, as *Maximus Tyrius, Marcus Antoninus Philosophus, Celsus, Plotinus, Porphyry, Philostratus, Julian, Libanius, Hierocles, Jamblichus, Eunapius, and Proclus.* See *Bryant’s Authenticity of the Scriptures.* Porphyry’s work, it is true, was ordered to be burnt; yet copies remained for both Apollinaris and Jerome to examine some time after the edict for its destruction. If however some works of the opponents of Christianity have perished, so have some of the apologetical writings of the Christians; as those of *Aristides and Quadratus, Apollinaris and Melito of Sardis, &c.* A great loss the Church sustained also in the Commentaries of *Hegeſippus.*

Besides the attacks that have been made on it, Christianity has had much to encounter from the extravagant additions and incumbrances, with which it has been loaded at different periods, and for which it has very unjustly been rendered responsible. Nothing perhaps in modern times has been more hurtful to the cause of Christianity, than the corruptions of the *Church of Rome.* These have enabled Infidels to speak of it in terms which were almost justifiable, because they were opposing those, who insisted upon it, that there could be no Christianity without all those absurd and very corrupt additions which they had annexed to it. These were called Christianity, exclusively almost of the New Testament, and therefore no wonder they were received as such, and treated as such, by the professed enemies of Christianity in general. “I do not,” says Dr. Beattie in his *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, “think myself concerned to answer any objection of those writers, who mistake the corruptions of Christianity, for  
D 2 Christianity

“Christianity itself;” in which he was certainly right: and this would well apply to most of the modern Deists, especially *French* and *German*, who continually consider *Papery* to be the *only* system of Christianity; or pretend to do so; for that many, who have declaimed most loudly against Papal Christianity of late years, have known how to distinguish, upon occasion, between genuine and corrupted Christianity, see *Mirabeau’s Speeches*, vol. ii. p. 269—274. and *Bishop Horsley’s Charge to the Clergy of Rochester*, at his second Visitation, 1800. It is remarkable that Justin Martyr and Origen continually complain, in their writings, of the true Christians being confounded, by their adversaries, with the sectarists and heretics who *assumed the title* of Christians. Mr. Fuller, in his *Gospel its own Witness*, observes, that Mr. Paine was obliged to have recourse to “*corrupted Christianity*,” to furnish him with arguments against Revelation, *Introduc’t.* p. 8; and he admirably proves his point. Another evil has arisen also out of the corruptions of the Church of Rome, viz. that many of the replies made to Freethinkers on the continent, being by the hands of Papists, have rather done injury than service to the cause. This may be seen in the *Abbé Nonnette’s Erreurs de Voltaire*, in which certainly the latter is often admirably exposed, but at the same time some of the most exceptionable tenets of the Catholics strenuously defended, and some very public characters grossly misrepresented, as any Englishman would discover, who would take the pains to examine his account of Henry VIII. Ann Boleyn, Cranmer, and the Queens Mary and Elizabeth. Many of our own Protestant writers, on the other hand, during the latter part of the 17th century, went so far in their writings to prove their *secession from the Roman tenets*, as to afford arguments for the Freethinkers; and the *Puritans* of England occasioned the same mischief. See *Christianity as old as the Creation*; where every argument is supported by passages (detached and *unconnected* passages indeed!) from *some of our ablest and best Divines*. Consult also the last chapter of *Warburton on Grace*.

As it is of importance to clear our own faith from the imputations thrown on Christianity in consequence of the corruptions of other Churches, I shall add

add to this long note, that most certainly much of what is advanced by the most celebrated Freethinkers of the continent, and of modern times, as Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, &c. is *in no manner* applicable to *our* Church and *our* tenets. Though *we* say, there is but one true religion, we do *not* say, "Que tout homme soit obligé de la suivre sous peine de damnation." If this implies an acknowledgment of all its doctrines without *conviction*; we say, *whoever is saved*, will be saved through Jesus Christ, be he Jew, Turk, Infidel, or Heretic, and according to the terms of the Gospel in some way or other; which are not therefore to be slighted or derided, but gratefully received and embraced, when competently proposed: and we affirm, that they may be competently proposed, without putting the "artisan qui ne vit que de son travail; le laboureur qui ne fait pas lire; la jeune fille délicate et timide; l'infirme qui peut à-peine sortir de son lit," to the trouble M. Rousseau states, of deep study, profound meditation, abstruse discussion, and long journeys. See *Emile*, vol. iii. Those who *do not*, or *cannot* receive the light of Christ's Gospel, will always be distinguished from those who wilfully reject it.

Page 7. line 3, &c.

"Quicquid fictum et commentitium, quia nulla ratione submixtum est, facile dissolvitur." *Lactantius de Ira Dei*, §. 11.

"A rigid examination is the only test of truth. For experience hath taught us, that even obstinacy and error can endure the fires of persecution. But it is genuine truth, and that alone, which comes out pure and unchanged from the severer tortures of debate." *Brown on the Characteristics*.

"Error contains in it the principles of its own mortality." *Godwin, Pol. Justice*, B. I. c. v.

"Il n'y a que la vérité qui dure avec le temps." *Bailly*. It was a saying of Voltaire's, "I am weary of hearing people repeat, that *twelve* men were sufficient to establish Christianity: I will prove, that *one* man is able to overthrow it." *Vie de Voltaire par Condorcet*. He forgot that, as Gamaliel says, "haply he might be found to fight against God." Acts v. 39.

Page 8. note (10.)

*Open and conspicuous vengeance on his enemies and blasphemers.*] The true God was only regarded as the tutelary God of the Jews, and every opposition to his religion therefore was directly made a trial of strength between the rival Deities. See 1 Sam. ch. iv. 5—10. The mistake of Ahaz in this point, 2 Chron. ch. xxviii. affords a curious instance of the notions of those times: Smitten by the Assyrians for his wickedness, he concluded *their Gods* had prevailed, and therefore began to “sacrifice to the Gods of Damascus that smote him, saying, Because the Gods of the kings of Syria help *them*, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help *me*. But *they were the ruin of the king, and of all Israel.*” This character of those early times is not sufficiently considered by those who object to the conduct of the Jews under their Theocratical government: and as it is a favourite objection in this age of *Reason* and *sentimental refinement*, I shall treat of it at some length. There are two modes of stating this objection: in one, the Bible is accused as describing the God of the Hebrews as a sanguinary tyrant, delighting in blood, and exercising vengeance on his enemies without rule or measure. In the other, the Bible is only charged with a gross inconsistency; and it is alleged, that however earnestly upon some occasions the attributes of mercy and goodness are ascribed to God, the method of his dealings with the Canaanites, and his judgments in general, as represented in the Jewish records, are in no manner reconcileable to such attributes. The first objection is false, and not worthy of attention: upon the latter, one question immediately occurs, which perhaps should be previously answered, before we can be acknowledged to be proper judges of the case. If we can reconcile all that passes in the world, and before our eyes, with these attributes of mercy and goodness in the Deity, as attributes of *constant, unqualified, and uninterrupted* energy, then we *may* be adequate judges of the subject in debate. If we can prove, that it is *impossible* that any human creature should be subjected to pain and distress with the connivance and consent of a *merciful and good* God, then

then we must needs have recourse to the Manichean God of evil, to help us through the difficulty, not only of interpreting the Scriptures of the Jews, but the common events of this visible world.

I shall apply myself to do away *this* charge of *inconsistency*, not only because it is the only charge that can with any justice be alleged against the Jewish Scriptures, but because it seems to admit, what should be admitted, namely, that these very ancient and remarkable books do contain very just descriptions of God's goodness, mercy, and beneficence, if they were not blended with other descriptions of a contrary nature. And it is remarkable, that many, in stating their objections to the inconsistencies in question, expressly refer to the very passage I should select in proof of the consistency of the Bible. In the 34th chapter of Exodus we have a remarkable description of the Deity, in the proclamation of the name of God, at the renewal of the tables. *And the Lord passed by, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty: visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.* It is to be remarked, that this is represented as proceeding from God himself. This is a divine revelation of his own attributes. Who could write such a legend as this? Who could put together such *apparent* contradictions, and expect to be believed? Was it a fool who wrote this? No, says the *Philosopher*, not a fool, for his *reason* had discovered to him one of the most important facts in the history of the universe; namely, that God is *merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth*: a fact, on which the human reason may safely rely, as a security against all vain terrors, the fears of *hell*, and torments of futurity. No, says the *Socinian*, not a fool, because he justly describes God as too merciful, and too forgiving, to need any *atonement for sin*. [See *Priestley's Appeal to the serious and candid Professors of Christianity*.] It is remarkable, as I said before, that both the *Philosopher* and the *Socinian* should expressly refer to this passage in proof of God's

everlasting goodness and mercy, and yet not notice the *inconsistency* of the passages, *otherwise*, than by fairly leaving out (*which they do*) all the *other* parts of the description. Shall we say then, that he who was wise enough to satisfy the Deist and Socinian, as to the most glorious attributes of the Creator, had not wit or wisdom enough to see, that vengeance could *not* belong to a *merciful* God? Is the text interpolated? No. How could it? Would the interpolator of the second part have seen no contradiction to his interpolation in the preceding terms? Would he not have *expunged* as well as interpolated? *Certainly*, had he had but so much discernment as a modern Socinian. Whoever therefore wrote, or even by interpolation made this passage to run as it does, must have conceived it equally possible for the same God to exercise *mercy*, and to execute *vengeance*; he must have conceived it to be no contradiction to represent the same Deity as transcendent in kindness, yet “extreme to mark what is done amiss.” Or, as Lactantius expressly describes him, “*erga pios indulgentissimus Pater, adversus impios rectissimus Judex.*” Those then who admit that this passage contains a just, and (as in the case of the Socinians) an *authorised* account of God’s attributes in one particular, may not reject the other part of the account, because it contradicts their preconceived notions of things. And as the historical accounts of God’s dealings with mankind correspond with this description, the next question is, what was the wickedness to be punished and corrected, and what were the measures pursued? I shall select the *most prominent* act of divine vengeance, God’s dealings with the *Canaanites*, and other enemies of the Jews.

It has been usual to account for these measures of severity three ways; first, by comparing them with natural calamities, as *earthquakes*, *famines*, *pestilence*, &c. as proceeding from God’s appointment, though by the instrumentality of mere natural causes, and *without notice* or *warning*; which should be attended to, because it is undeniable, that it makes the case of the Canaanites less objectionable even, than some events continually passing before our eyes. But of this hereafter. Secondly, some are for referring the whole to God’s absolute



solute decrees ; too much to the entire exclusion of all *moral* considerations whatsoever. [See *Jamieson on the Use of Sacred History*.] And thirdly, others conceive God's word to have been so pledged by the promise made to Abraham, as to have admitted of no alternative. But the simplest solution is to be found in the Scripture itself, and the circumstances of the times when the events happened. Let us but *suppose* the case, (the *real* case fully appears to have been so,) that except what God had been just pleased to reveal of himself to Moses, no nation in the whole world *then* knew or acknowledged the *one true* GOD : that, through a corruption of the religion derived by tradition from Adam, they had been brought to *put their trust* in numberless *tutelary* Deities, to the exclusion of the very name of God. And let us suppose further, that the only people, among whom there was any chance of God's being justly acknowledged and duly worshipped, were in a state of persecution, despised and oppressed. God never acts so as to over-rule the human mind, but to guide it by notices and warnings, and motives. Let us now proceed a step further, and suppose such a case to be in contemplation, that the knowledge of the true God was to be revived in men's minds, by openly convincing them of the vanity and folly of putting their trust in idols ; the danger of *defying* the God of Israel, and of the manifest and certain benefit of trusting solely to *his* care and protection. The first case could only be proved by the discomfiture of those who trusted in idols : the second, by some most impressive vindication of the majesty and power of the true God ; and the last, by a constant support of those, who were known and acknowledged to put their trust in HIM. Is not all this peculiarly consistent with the spirit of Moses's appeals to God, whenever the Israelites offended, that he would not withdraw his protection from them, for fear that those, who looked upon them as under the peculiar care of God, should say, " Because the Lord "*was not able* to bring this people into the land, which "*he sware* unto them, therefore he hath slain them in "*the wilderness.*" (Numbers xiv. Deut. ix. 28.) Is not this consistent with what Jethro says to Moses, after the latter had recounted to him " all that he had  
" done

“done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel’s sake?” “Now I know that the Lord is greater than *all Gods*; for in *the thing* wherein they *dealt proudly* *He was above them.*” Exod. xviii.

But there cannot possibly be any cases adduced so strong as those recounted in the 18th chapter of the first book, and 19th chapter of the second book of Kings; and in the 3d chapter of the book of Daniel. I never read those histories without conceiving that I have then a full view of God’s dispensations in Judea, and of the necessity arising out of the circumstances of the times, for his especial interposition. In all the three instances we have a mighty king at the head of a conspiracy and confederacy against the living God, and whole nations concerned in the event. In each case idolatry is resisted and exposed with such a rational and holy confidence in the true God; such a steady and determined reliance on his just vindication of his own insulted honour, as every dispassionate man must allow the occasions expressly called for. In the two instances of *Abab* and *Nebuchadnezzar*, how satisfactory and convincing are the conclusions of each relation! the strong emotions of the subjects of the former, on the descent of the fire from heaven, and their sudden exclamation, *The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God.* In the latter, the proclamation of *Nebuchadnezzar* himself, “Then *Nebuchadnezzar* spake and said, Blessed be the God of *Shadrach, Meshech,* and *Abednego*, who hath sent his angel and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and hath *changed the King’s word*, and yielded their bodies that they might not serve nor worship any God except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of *Shadrach, Meshech,* and *Abednego*, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because *there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.*” Nor even in the second instance adduced is the case less striking. How must *Sennacherib* and all his people have reflected upon his vain boast against *Judah*, when he enumerated, not the nations, but the *Gods* of the nations, against whom he had prevailed! “Have the  
“*Gods*

“ *Gods of the nations* delivered those which my father destroyed, as *Gozan*, and *Haran*, and *Rezepb*, and the children of *Eden*, which are in *Thelasar*? Where is the king of *Hamath*, and the king of *Arpad*, and the king of the city of *Sepharvaim*, of *Hena*, and *Ivab*?” These indeed are, all three of them, very conspicuous instances of the *defiance* of the God of Israel. But let us remember also, that though God was, certainly, to *these idolaters*, chiefly “the God of Israel only,” that is, the tutelary Deity of the Jews; yet their proceedings, and the tendency of their *defiance* was, to reject him also as the moral Governor of the world: their *sacrifices* and *oblations*, their *trespass offerings*, and *vows*, were all devoted to their own Gods, and resembled their gross and impure nature. This is so well known, that it need not be insisted on. It was not the *religion* of the world only, but the *morals*, that required correction, for they were intimately connected with the idolatry of the times. The *defiance* of the God of Israel therefore was not less than a defiance of God and all his moral attributes; and every thing connected with morality, as well as religion, depended on the vindication of God’s irresistible supremacy.

There could be no harm, under these circumstances, in God’s acting by the Israelites as *though he was* their tutelary Deity, the great object being to detach the profane nations from their idols. The acknowledgment of God in his proper character would have followed upon such a conversion. This is only mentioned in allusion to the construction Lord Bolingbroke is pleased to put upon the covenant made with Abraham. [See *Leland’s View of Deistical Writers*, vol. ii. 125. 5th edit.] There is a passage in the book of Wisdom, in which the distinction is beautifully pointed out. “Neither is there any God but THOU, that carest for all.” ch. xii. 13. This is supposed evidently to allude to the ancient worship of *tutelary Deities*.

But here another question is stated. Supposing the interference of God to be necessary, “If God wishes to punish,” says M. Volney, “are not earthquakes, volcanoes, and the thunderbolt in his hand? Does a God of clemency know no other way of correcting but by extermination?” (*Révolut. des Empires*, ch. xiii.)

We

We answer, Yes; he employs perhaps earthquakes, volcanoes, and lightning, as well as extermination, even to this day. The question is, was there special and apparent reason for the very *mode* of correction recorded in the Scriptures? And to this we answer, *Yes*. We have already spoken of the case of *defiance*, and we will venture to say, that if the historical parts of the Old Testament are carefully examined, almost every case may be resolved by this single circumstance; that it was a case of actual *defiance* against God, and wherein victory and success would have led to the most extensive and fatal consequences. But to return to M. Volney, We are bound to conclude the mode of extermination to be necessary for some high purposes, if we will but allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves; for to shew that God did not *delight* in the blood of his enemies, as some choose to insist, David is not even allowed to build the Temple of God, but Solomon is preferred. And why? Because the former “*had shed blood abundantly, and made great wars;*” and the latter was to be “*a man of rest.*” 1 Chron. xxii. 8, 9. And yet, that David was an instrument in God’s hands; in most cases, he himself insinuates, *ib.* xxviii. 3, 4. M. Volney also betrays great *ignorance* by his question, as it has been most ably shewn, that earthquakes, famine, pestilence, &c. were *not* the proper punishments, these being referred by the Pagans to the agency of their false Gods: [see *Owen’s Sermons*, and *Jenkin’s Reasonableness*, &c.] The character of those ages was, that “they deemed either *fire*, or *wind*, or the *swift air*, or the circle of the *stars*, or the violent *water*, or the *lights of heaven*, to be the *Gods* that govern the world:” it was fitting they should be taught “how much mightier HE is, who maketh them.” Wisdom xiii. 2. 4.

In the description of the Deity, which has been the principal subject of this long note, we find it ascribed to the Deity, “that he will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations.” This happens to be a part of the Decalogue, and that part which Mr. Paine, in his *Age of Reason*, chooses to assert, “is contrary to every principle of moral justice.” But I suppose Mr. Paine would  
not

not deny, that in the common course of things children do suffer for the sins of their fathers, consequentially, though not vindictively : and that this was in the view of the divine Legislator may be seen by comparing Deut. xxiv. 16. and the reference made to it in the case of Amaziah, 2 Kings xiv. 6. And this will be consistent with Ezekiel xviii. The son is not to suffer *for*, but often in consequence of, his father's iniquities. And let this be recollected, that at all events God can foresee a time for compensation, a time to come, when the son shall *no more* be punished for the iniquity of his father, but "when the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon the righteous, and the wickedness of the wicked upon the wicked." If the question had related only to the policy of the case, we might cite Cicero in defence of the measure, who praises it as a wise proceeding. "Parentium scelera filiorum pœnis lui—hoc *præclare* legibus comparatum est, ut caritas liberorum amiciores parentes reipublicæ redderet." *Epist. ad Brut.* epist. xii. and in the xvth epist. he calls it "et antiquum et omnium civitatum." Had Mr. Paine been capable of reading Cicero, he would scarce have ventured to say, that no lawgiver would have thought of such an expedient ; and he might also have learnt from the following references, how general the notion was, that children were to suffer for the sins of their parents. *Theognis* 729. &c. *Solon* 25. &c. *Oraculum Delph.* apud *Ælian.* *Var. Hist.* lib. iii. 43. *Plutarch.* *de his qui sero numine puniuntur.* *Hor.* *Od.* xxviii. 30. lib. i. et vi. 1. lib. iii. *Virg.* *Georg.* i. 501. et *Æneid.* viii. 484.

That Moses had as delicate feelings in regard to the promiscuous destruction of the righteous and wicked as any Freethinker whatever, may be seen in Numbers xvi. 22. when God, through Moses, directs the Israelites to *have no mercy* on the Canaanites, as Deut. vii. 2. nor to *pity* the idolaters, Deut. xiii. 8. It is no more than a judicial sentence of death, as may be seen by the case of the murderer, Deut. xix. 13. See also Deut. xxv. 12.

A question often arises in the discussion of this point, which is not unfrequently determined against the Bible; namely, whether God's *express direction* is in reality, as  
to

to its moral effects, different from his permission ; and I mention it the more freely, because in another case Infidels seem to have decided it, against themselves. In the question of *necessity* they make no difference between the permission and immediate direction of motives. See the *King of Prussia's Letters to Voltaire*: “ Car “ que Dieu nous *donne la liberté de mal faire*, ou qu’il nous “ *pousse immédiatement au crime*, cela revient à-peu-près “ au même ; il n’y a que du plus ou du moins.” Therefore if we had only *fatalists* to deal with, there would clearly be no question about this: for that evils happen through God’s permission without an impeachment of his mercy, &c. none doubt but Atheists. “ Quod per- “ mittitur a causa potenti,” says the learned *Dr. Burnet of the Charter-House*, “ quodammodo approbatur ; si non “ absolute, saltem comparate.” It has been very well observed by the learned Dr. Leland, in his reply to Tindal, that “ if all the events that are related in Scripture “ had been barely recorded, without assigning any reason “ for them at all, they would not probably be thought “ an objection either against Scripture or Providence, “ since many of the same kind occur in the history of “ all ages and nations.” Part ii. ch. 12, 13. And indeed this is most true ; and it would be difficult to say by what sentiment the unbeliever is led to be so compassionate towards every idolater whom the holy Scriptures describe as suffering under the hand of God, while the daily calamities that are suffered to fall promiscuously on the just and unjust, the old and the young, give no shock to his reason. God by his servant Moses commands the earth to open, and swallow up the *impious* Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The Deist is shocked. His reason revolts. God permits a quantity of matter to ferment and kindle in the bowels of the earth, and overthrows a beautiful and fertile country, inhabited by millions of persons. The Deist contemplates the scene, compassionates the sufferers perhaps, but falls into no distrust whatsoever of the mercy and loving-kindness of the God of nature !—M. de Voltaire compassionates Agag ; and yet, let the punishment be judged of as it may, he could not without *prejudice* appear very amiable in M. de Voltaire’s eyes ; for what had he done ? “ His sword had made women childless.”

1 Sam. xv. 23. That M. de Voltaire was liable to *such prejudices*, see his *Siècle de Louis XIV.* where he can find excuses enough for many most flagitious crimes.

This note is already too long; I shall therefore bring it to a conclusion with this general remark upon the Bible history, considered in regard to the times to which it refers. In the holy Scriptures then we certainly read of many nations and individuals being forewarned of evils coming upon them unless they would repent, and of many evils being averted from them upon their repentance: we read of many gross wickednesses adequately punished, such as *murder, incest, adultery, theft, and treachery*: we read of nothing more frequently than the discountenancing of idolatry in all its forms, and with all its horrid and disgusting rites. But in profane histories, especially those that reach back to the times and events recorded in Scripture, we read of similar evils, *without any notice or warning*, falling promiscuously on the deserving and undeserving, without mitigation or *alternative*. We read of incests, rapes, murders, and every possible atrocity committed without scruple, and without any specific punishment. And we read of the grossest idolatry accompanied with the basest and most abominable practices, and with scarce one instance of true and genuine religion. Of wars we read in both histories, and of the ruin and destruction of divers people: but in regard to the wars in the land of Canaan, independent of all other considerations, two things are noticeable which are generally overlooked: first, that the Canaanites had warning given them of what was coming upon them, and for *what cause*, as appears from what Rachel says, Joshua ii. 9, 10, &c. and what the Gibeonites declared to Joshua, chap. ix. Secondly, that all the cities and nations, which the Israelites destroyed, appeared in arms against them; not one of them made overtures of peace, or testified a wish for it; nay, some of them even made war against those who did do so, and merely on that account. See Joshua x. 4.

Page 13. note (11).

*Which is not attainable by the Theologian.*] Mr. Gibbon is tempted to ridicule the Abbé de la Bleterie's wish, that some *Théologien Philosophe* would undertake the refutation

tion of Julian: "a strange Centaur!" he remarks. See note 31. ch. xxiii. Such Centaurs however *have* existed, *do* exist, and always *may* exist.

Page 14. note (12).

*They wish Revelation to be examined in all its points and bearings.]* Without any fear of its not being found able to endure the examination and scrutiny of *Reason*, as Mr. Hume presumes to insinuate, vol. ii. *Essays*, p. 146. See Dr. Campbell's excellent remarks in his *Dissertation on Miracles*, pp. 232, 233. and the conclusion of *Bishop Warburton's Tract on Grace*.

Page 15. note (13.)

"Upon this general view of the Scripture, I would remark, how great a length of time the whole relation takes up, near six thousand years of which are past; and how great a variety of things it treats of: the natural and moral system or history of the world, including the time when it was first formed; all contained in the very first book, and evidently written in a rude and unlearned age; and in subsequent books, the various common and prophetic history, and the particular dispensation of Christianity. Now all this together gives the largest scope for criticism, and for confutation of what is capable of being confuted, either from reason or from common history, or from any inconsistency in its several parts. And it is a thing which deserves, I think, to be mentioned, that whereas some imagine, the supposed doubtfulness of the evidence for revelation implies a positive argument that it is not true; it appears, on the contrary, to imply a positive argument that it *is* true. For could any common relation, of such antiquity, extent, and variety, (for in these things the stress of what I am now observing lies,) be proposed to the examination of the world, that it could not in an age of *knowledge* and *liberty* be confuted, or shewn to have nothing in it to the satisfaction of reasonable men; this would be thought a strong presumptive proof of its truth." *Butler's Analogy*, Part II. chap. vii. p. 380.



## Page 16. note (14).

*Such a connected chain of facts.*] We may add so uniform a history in all respects. For, as Justin Martyr well observes, the agreement of the sacred writers is argument sufficient of their inspiration, compared with the inconsistencies and contradictions to be found in all the systems of the Pagan philosophers, Plato and Aristotle not excepted; and considering the subjects upon which they agreed. His expressions are very strong; they instruct us, says he, “Ὡςπερ ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰσὸς καὶ μιᾶς γλῶττης καὶ περὶ Θεοῦ, καὶ περὶ κόσμου κτίσεως, καὶ περὶ πλάσεως Ἀνθρώπου, καὶ περὶ ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς ἀθανασίας, καὶ τῆς μετὰ τὸν βίον τοῦτον μέλλουσης κρίσεως, καὶ περὶ πάντων ὧν ἀναγκαῖον ἡμῖν εἶδεναι—ἀκολουθῶς καὶ συμφώνως ἀλλήλοις—καὶ ταῦτα ἐν διαφόροις τοποῖς καὶ χρόνοις.” *Cobort. ad Græcos*, p. 7. edit. Sylburg. 1593. See also his introduction to the *Aristotelian Doctrines*, where he notices the agreement of the sacred writers in regard to the creation, as well as in respect to the Deity himself.

## Page 18. note (15).

*Mr. Paine's Age of Reason* perhaps was the most mischievous book that appeared, from its small size and popular style: but many other writers continually describe the æra of the French revolution by the title he adopted for his book. See *Dr. Darwin's Zoonomia*, *Godwin's Polit. Justice*, and *Wolstonecroft's View of the French Revolution*. But the greatest distinction of *this peculiar Age of Reason* is, assuredly, the absurd and idolatrous deification of her in the French republic: and the spirit of the age may be well discerned in the painting of the celebrated David, hung up in the *Hôtel des Invalides*, delineating the triumph of *man* over *Religion* and *Royalty*, the *Goddes of Reason* being described as encouraging and approving the overthrow of *thrones* and *altars*. This overthrow is heightened in the picture alluded to by every thing violent, horrid, and iniquitous. All of which, it is shocking to say, has been, in the course of the revolution, fully *realised*. And as to the *catastrophe* of this great struggle, surely we may now (1804) apply what Lactantius says, to *their* deification of both *Reason* and

*Liberty.* “Has ergo falsas consecrationes sequitur, quod  
 “necesse est. Qui enim virtutes sic colunt, id est, qui  
 “*umbras et imagines* virtutum consecrantur; ea ipsa  
 “*quæ vere sunt, tenere non possunt!*” Lib. i. 20. I am  
 sorry to add to this note, that our own metropolis was  
 disgraced by a temple of Reason. The following is a  
 concise account of the dedication of such temples in the  
 city of Paris, taken from the address of a respectable ma-  
 gistrate of the United States to the grand jury of Lu-  
 zerne county, and inserted by Mr. Fuller in his *Tract*  
*on Deism.* “They ordered ‘*the Temple of Reason*’ to be  
 “inscribed on the churches, in contempt of the doc-  
 “trine of Revelation. Atheistical and licentious ho-  
 “milies have been published in the churches instead of  
 “the old service, and a ludicrous imitation of the  
 “Greek mythology exhibited under the title of ‘*the*  
 “‘*Religion of Reason.*’ Nay, they have gone so far as to  
 “dress up a common strumpet with the most fantastic  
 “decorations, whom they blasphemously styled the  
 “‘*Goddes of Reason,*’ and who was carried to church on  
 “the shoulders of some Jacobins, selected for the pur-  
 “pose, escorted by the National Guards, and the consti-  
 “tuted *Authorities.* When they got to the church,  
 “the strumpet was placed on the altar erected for the  
 “purpose, and harangued the people; who in return  
 “professed the deepest adoration to her, and sung the  
 “*Carmagnole* and other songs, by way of worshipping  
 “her. This horrid scene—almost too horrid to relate—  
 “was concluded by burning the Prayer-book, Confes-  
 “sional, and every thing appropriated to the use of  
 “public worship: numbers in the mean time danced  
 “round the flames with every appearance of frantic  
 “and infernal mirth.” I shall only add, that this was  
 at the very time when the *National Convention* applauded  
 and sanctioned the speech of M. Dupont, wherein he pro-  
 fessed himself an *Atheist*; and wherein were the follow-  
 ing curious expressions: “Thrones are overturned!  
 “Sceptres broken! Kings expire! And yet the altars  
 “of God remain! A single breath of enlightened Rea-  
 “son will now be sufficient to make them disappear—  
 “*Nature and Reason,* these ought to be the Gods of men!  
 “These are *my Gods!*”

Page 19. note (16).

“ Quos equidem si putarem satis idoneos ad bene vendum duces esse, et ipse sequeretur, et alios ut sequerentur hortarer.” *Lactantius*, lib. i.

Page 20. note (17).

“ The suspicion, that the theory of what is called the Christian religion is fabulous, is becoming very extensive in all countries.” *Age of Reason*. “ The Christian theory” (Query, what does this mean?) is little else than the idolatry of the ancient mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and profit. And it yet remains to Reason and Philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud.” Our present age, says M. de Gebelin, Author of the *Monde Primitif*, has made the most rapid strides towards perfection. “ Notre siècle est le siècle des découvertes et des lumières ;” probably, “ nous touchons au moment de la grande révolution, que le rétablissement du grand ordre est réservé à notre siècle.” M. de Gebelin did not rely upon *Reason*, but upon the visible *order of Nature*, to set us to rights. In this, both himself and Rousseau, who was for trusting every thing to *conscience* or *feeling*, differed from most other modern Deists. In other respects they may both be considered as conspicuous characters of the *Age of Reason*. M. de Gebelin was a believer in animal magnetism, ancient sorcery, astrology, &c. Of the latter he says in one of his writings, “ dont, malgré les abus, on n’a jamais pu démontrer ni l’incertitude, ni l’inutilité.” They were both advocates for the system of “ *perfectibility* ;” but so widely different in their ideas, that while M. de Gebelin’s doctrine was “ *Perfectionnez vous*,” Rousseau’s was, “ *Ne vous perfectionnez pas*.”

Page 21. note (18).

Lactantius had *philosophers* to deal with, of whom he says, “ aut omnino nihil sciunt, idque ipsum pro summa scientia præ se ferunt ; aut qui non perspiciunt etiam quæ sciunt ; aut qui, quoniam se putant scire, quæ nesciunt, inepte arroganterque desipiunt.” Lib. vi. 18. *Institut.*

“ If this age,” says Bp. Berkeley, “ be singularly  
 “ productive of infidels, I shall not therefore conclude  
 “ it to be more knowing, but only more presuming,  
 “ than former ages.” *Minute Philosopher*, p. 345.

Page 21. note (19).

*She has been invited to interfere.*] That some of the primitive Fathers of the Church encouraged and invited the examination of their doctrines, see *Church's Answer to Middleton*, ch. viii. §. 9. where he defends Tertullian. Though the Fathers recommended submission to God's Revelation, when once known to be a Revelation; yet they by no means precluded enquiry into the truth of the Revelation. See *Athanasii Opera*, tom. ii. 325. and *Clemens Alexand. Strom.* lib. v. p. 550. cited by Edwards in his *Preservative against Socinianism*, pp. 9. 15. See also pp. 16, 17. of the same work, as to the province of *Reason* in judging of a divine Revelation, and *Bp. Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ*, pp. 148, 149. B. II. chap. viii.

With regard to many of the works with which the press has teemed in this age of *Reason*, we may observe with Mrs. West, in her admirable Letters to her Son, that “ their authors do not audaciously demand to be  
 “ heard at the bar of *manly Reason*: they know that  
 “ tribunal unfavourable. It is to *juvenile* readers that  
 “ they apply.” We might add, that, for the same reason, the *weak* and *illiterate* have been *appealed* to, in works not calculated to deceive the *well-instructed*. It is remarkable, that even Dr. Priestley and Dr. Geddes are to be suspected of such designs: the former in the preface to his *Early Opinions*, &c. says, “ Least of all  
 “ can I expect to make any impressions on those who  
 “ are advanced in life: my chief expectations are from  
 “ the *young* and from *posterity*.” And the latter, in the preface to his Version of the Pentateuch, expresses a hope, that, by his “ *free* manner of interpreting the Bible, he may procure its being read and studied by  
 “ *fashionable scholars*, and the *sons of science*.” p. 13. It is also well observed by Mr. Fuller, in the introduction of his work, entitled *The Gospel its own Witness*, that, “ notwithstanding all the boasts of Reason  
 “ among modern Deists, not one in ten of them can be  
 “ kept

“ kept to the fair and honourable use of this weapon.  
 “ On the contrary, they are driven to substitute dark  
 “ insinuation, low wit, profane ridicule, and gross abuse.  
 “ Such were the weapons of Shaftesbury, Tindal,  
 “ Morgan, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Hume, and Gibbon;  
 “ and such are the weapons of the author of the *Age*  
 “ of Reason.”

Page 21. note 20.

“ Si les Déistes avoient pu se choisir une époque propre à provigner leurs sentimens, laquelle auroient-ils préférée ? réduits, comme ils le sont, à combattre avec des sophismes, ils auroient du choisir un siècle où l'on se piquât plus de briller que de raisonner ; où le bel esprit jouât de grand rôle, où le ridicule sur-tout fût de tous les fléaux le plus redouté ; où la licence des mœurs donnât à la religion un air austère et sauvage. N'est-ce pas là le tableau de l'Europe depuis au moins quatre-vingts ans ?” See a small work, entitled, *L'Impie démasqué*. The author concludes, from the small success of Deists with such advantages on their side, in addition to their own talents, and their indefatigable exertions, that they never can be expected to prevail.

Page 23. note (21).

*Man was meant to be left in ignorance.*] I would here observe, that the peculiar manner, in which the *internal viscera* are secluded from our own inspection, would seem to offer a complete reply to the fancy of those who have conceived, that one time or other “ *Mind would become omnipotent over matter,*” inasmuch as to give us “ a power of maintaining the human body in perpetual youth and vigour.” *Godwin*. This is one of the most brilliant prospects modern philosophy seems to have opened to us. There would appear however to be a precise barrier established in the human frame, which we are forbidden to pass, if the following account of *Ganglions* be admissible ; namely, that being attached wholly to nerves which supply the organs which have *involuntary* motion, and being *non-electric* bodies, they are the *checks* which prevent our *volitions* from extending to them. See the *Philosophy of Medicine*, vol. ii. p. 174. and pp. 179, 180 ; where the embarrassments,

barraffments, that might have ensued from subjecting the vital involuntary motions to the will of the individual, are well detailed. In *Nieuwentyl's Religious Philosopher* it is observed, that those parts only that have their nerves from the *cerebellum*, as the arms, hands, legs, &c. are subject to the will, and not those which derive their nerves from the *cerebrum*, as the heart, arteries, stomach, bowels, &c. See also *Synopsis Metaphysicæ Glasg.* Part. iii. cap. i. edit. 4; and some good remarks on what God has *concealed* from us, in the Dialogue on Systematic Physics, in the *Spectacle de la Nature*. “Ubi ergo sapientia est? Ut nequē te omnia “scire putes; quod DEI est; neque omnia nescire, “quod pecudis. Est enim aliquod medium, quod sit “Hominis, id est, scientia cum ignoratione conjuncta et “temperata.” *Laët. Instit.* lib. iii. 6. See also lib. ii. cap. 8.

Page 25. note (22).

*As to the actual certainty of the matter.*] “Hardly do “we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and “with labour do we find the things that are before us; “but the things that are in heaven who hath searched “out? And thy counsel who hath known? Except “thou give wisdom, and send thy HOLY SPIRIT from “above.” Wisdom ix. 16, 17. How valuable an *example* also have we for the modest use of our reason in regard to such speculations, as well as for our reliance on Revelation alone, in the case of the prophet Ezekiel; who being asked, in the Valley of Bones, whether *they* could revive, only replied, “O Lord God, THOU “knowest.” chap. xxxvii. ver. 3. See also some admirable and very applicable passages, Ecclesiasticus iii. 21—25. Without Revelation, says Archbp. Tillotson, “man “is secure of nothing he enjoys in this world, and uncertain of every thing he hopes for.” But lest these references should be disputed, see the 4th Reflexion, §. 18. of the *Philosophie du Bon Sens* of the Marquis d’Argens, and Mr. Gibbon’s 15th chapter; where is the following remark: “As the most sublime efforts of “philosophy,” says he, “can extend no further than “to point out the desire, the hope, or at most the probability of a future state, there is nothing but a divine Revelation that can ascertain its existence.”

Page

Page 27. note (23).

*What we can now only behold, &c.]* That our *merely bodily* faculties are *capable* of more than the common uses we put them to at present, it seems reasonable to conjecture, from the application of optical instruments, which do not alter the *organ* of vision, but only tend to vary the *medium* through which we behold objects.

Page 28. note (24).

*The age of Reason cannot be an age when Reason is to act without regard to these intellectual treasures.]* “In disquisitions on which we cannot determine without much learned investigation, *Reason uninformed* is by no means to be depended on.” *Soame Jenyns*. It is a remark of *Roussseau*, in opposition to *la Mothe* and *l’Abbé Terrasson*, that human Reason cannot now be said to be really *advanced* as a *faculty*; for what it has gained on one side it has lost on the other. “Que tous les esprits partent toujours du même point, et que le temps qu’on emploie à savoir ce que d’autres ont pensé étant perdu pour apprendre à penser soi-même, on a plus de lumières acquises, et moins de vigueur d’esprit.” *Emile*, liv. iv. 206. “In regard to knowledge,” says the ingenious *Mrs. West*, “it is fair to say, we live in a late period, heirs to a rich inheritance.” See her *Letters to her Son*, Lett. iii.

Of all the works that should be consulted in an *age of Reason*, by those who are really disposed to consider it as such, I would by all means recommend the following excellent Tracts of *Mr. Boyle*. I refer to the folio edition of his works. Vol. iii. article 28. *On the Reconcilableness of Reason and Religion*. Vol. iv. art. 10. *A Discourse of Things above Reason*. Ib. art. 20. *On the high Veneration Man owes to God peculiar for his Wisdom and Power*. Ib. art. 21. *A free Enquiry into the vulgarly received notion of Nature*. Ib. art. 24. *A Disquisition about the Final Causes of Natural Things*. Vol. v. art. 2. *The Christian Virtuoso*, with the *Appendix*, and second Part, articles 10 and 11.





---

## S E R M O N II.

---

ACTS v. 38, 39.

*And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone ; For if this counsel or this work be of man, it will come to nought :  
But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.*

IN my last Discourse I considered this advice of the learned Jew as supplying us with a test of the truth of our most holy religion, not only particularly adapted to the proof of its being of God, but as including a call upon every true Christian to examine, from time to time, what has been done, or may be doing, by *man*, to bring it “ to nought.”

I also noticed the significant title, which had been given to the age in which we live; and I confessed myself not unwilling to acknowledge, that, from the rapid advancement of human knowledge of late years, Reason *might* now have some advantages she could not command before; so that  
man's

man's opposition to Revelation, as far as the latter depends for its reception on argument, or learning, or discoveries, may in this late contest have appeared more critical than in former ones (<sup>1</sup>).

There is scarce one doctrine of Revelation, or even a fact recorded in the books of Scripture, at which the human Reason has not at different times taken offence. She revolts at the history of the creation of the earth, and particularly at the low æra assigned to it; at the account of the origin of the human species, the temptation and fall of man, and introduction of evil into the world; at the call of the Israelites; the institution of sacrifices; the extirpation of idolators. She will not hear of redemption and atonement by *blood*, the Incarnation, or the Trinity. She will not bear to be told, that she needs any supernatural instruction, but still confidently maintains, or rather more confidently than ever was the case before, that the visible works of God are the only Revelation we can expect or desire, not only of the *power*, and *wisdom*, and *majesty* of the supreme Being, but of his *word* and his *will* (<sup>2</sup>).

Our

Our reply to many of these objections would lie in a narrow compass, if we could have leave to reduce the several questions to their true terms, and confine them within their proper limits ; but where *history* and *criticism* should decide, we are for ever interrupted by metaphysical and moral arguments, wholly inapplicable to the case. If we were to comply with all the demands of Deists, we should not be allowed to appeal to the Canon of Scripture, till we had determined by *à priori* reasoning both the utility and necessity of Revelation in general. We should not be allowed to plead the evidence of miracles, till we had not only demonstrated their possibility, but the sufficiency and competency of *any* evidence to prove them true. It is not recollected all the while, that if the Scriptures are but *authentic*, there can be no doubt upon any of these points. And it is a remarkable circumstance, and can only be referred to the especial blessing and providence of God, that if the sacred books are *not* authentic, they are peculiarly capable of contradiction : and perhaps never more so than in this age, so  
much

much boasted, not of *Reason* merely, but of experiment and enquiry.

*New* objections there may still be none to notice<sup>(3)</sup>, but only such additions to old ones, as the advancement of knowledge just alluded to may have served to supply. I have proposed some arrangement of these objections, by referring them to the several heads of HISTORY, PHYSICS, METAPHYSICS, ETHICS, and CRITICISM: an arrangement, which, as far as it can be done, I still mean to pursue. Under the head of HISTORY I propose to consider the extraordinary defect of all records and historical monuments, that could be alleged to be in *positive contradiction* to the Mosaic writings; even now that the whole globe has been traversed, and every enquiry of that nature pursued and encouraged in a way unknown before. Under the head of PHYSICS I purpose to give an account of the invincible obstacles, that seem to be in the way of our attaining to any clear comprehension of the causes that *have* operated in time *past* in the body of the earth; so as to enable us to form any conjectures from thence concerning the high or  
low

low antiquity of the general mass of our globe. I shall notice the consent of many celebrated naturalists to the *low* antiquity of our present continents, as deduced from observation, and the extraordinary facts that tend to corroborate the Scripture accounts of an *universal* deluge. Under the head of METAPHYSICS I shall have some remarks to make on the present state of the questions, concerning the *materiality* of the *soul*, and the *necessity* of *human actions*; and I shall have frequent occasion incidentally to notice the inefficacy of all speculative reasonings on certain subjects connected with *Theology*. Under ETHICS I propose to consider the indispensable necessity of a divine Revelation for moral purposes; to notice some of the most offensive moral principles and systems of modern reformers, and to shew how ably Christianity has been vindicated from the charge of omissions in this line. And under the head of CRITICISM I shall endeavour to point out the great abuses to which it has been exposed; its great utility to secure us from the misrepresentations of modern Deists; and the satisfactory manner, in which it has recently been applied to confute  
the

the dogmatical assertions of modern Unitarians.

But there are still some points, which will require to be considered in a more general way, and which cannot be distinctly brought under any of these heads. Such as the very extraordinary difference lately manifested in respect to the *separation* of the *two Covenants*, and the *divine authority* of the *Old Testament*; and in regard to the *prejudices* and *prepossessions*, which have been said to stand in the way of the due exercise of Reason, and more particularly in this place.

An eminent sceptic<sup>a</sup> lays it down as one reason for the ancient Pagan religions being much looser than the modern, that the former were *traditional*, and the latter *scriptural*. In this he may have been right; but when he adds, that having *no Canon*, the Pagan religions seemed to vanish like a cloud, when one approached to them and examined them piecemeal, we may surely insist upon it, that this *want* of a *Canon* could not be the chief occasion of their *weakness* and *instability*. A traditional religion may find a

<sup>a</sup> Hume.

thousand subterfuges and means of escape, when attacked, which will not be the case with a scriptural one: and so inconsistent are Deists, that I find this expressly admitted by another writer, no less eminent than the former for his enmity to our most holy religion<sup>b</sup>. The Canon forms one determinate object, against which every bolt may be directed; it cannot shelter itself under any obscure tradition, or bring forward false legends and unheard-of tales to support its sinking credit: it must stand alone, and speak for itself<sup>c</sup>; at least such is the state of things according to the articles of our established Church. *We have no tradition or infallible judge to decide for us authoritatively. We admit no Canon but the Holy Scriptures: these may be perverted, (for the Socinians pervert them<sup>d</sup>,) but they cannot be corrupted or altered<sup>e</sup>.*

We should have a just right therefore to insist upon referring every question to the

<sup>b</sup> Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp. c. xxiii. p. 71.

<sup>c</sup> See Letters on Mythology, 120. 126. 130. London. 1748.

<sup>d</sup> See Edwards's Preservative against Socinianism, part iv. 71.

<sup>e</sup> Jenkins's Reasonableness of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 117.

*authenticity* of the *Scriptures*; for if they are but true, we must stand reasonably acquitted of all undue prejudice, in submitting to the doctrines they contain; and so have they been transmitted to us, that it is scarcely possible to conceive that any writings could exist, more capable of confirmation if true, of contradiction if false.

The Author of the Pentateuch wrote of *facts*, and the Prophets prophesied of *facts*. The Author of the Pentateuch relates, that the world began at a certain period, (not a period so remote, as that no annals could reach it; but, in comparison with the fabricated records of many nations, a *recent* period,) and that a certain people lived under a *theocracy* (<sup>4</sup>). These are extraordinary facts to relate, because they must have been exposed, from the very first, to many contradictory evidences, the failure of which must be allowed to operate as a confirmation. The world might manifestly have been proved; from the *after*-discovery of *regular* historical records, from respectable tradition, from the superior antiquity of arts and sciences in some places, to be older. The interior of the earth, perhaps the form and fashion of the  
earth



itself, *might* have supplied *chronometers* of irrefragable authority. And as to the *theocracy*, history might have been found to record, not the discomfiture and overthrow, but the triumphs of idolatry. The knowledge of the true God, according to the Scriptures, was in the early ages confined to a small district comparatively, and we have the concurrent testimony of profane history to prove the general prevalence of idolatry all around. Do the records of the world testify, that the knowledge of the true God was propagated<sup>f</sup> from this small district, *where the theocracy was said to prevail*, to the overthrow of idolatry? or did their powerful and idolatrous neighbours, *who disputed their pretensions*, prevail against them?

Again, the Prophets prophesied of *facts* to happen. It is an easy enquiry, Have they happened? have they been fulfilled? They prophesied of *many* facts; many *connected* facts: Have any such taken place? (<sup>s</sup>) Can we fix upon any series of events correspond-

<sup>f</sup> *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, vol. ii. Letter 28. and the *Miscellaneous Observations of Jonathan Edwards*, §. 26.

ent thereto? They specified particular *times*, particular *places*, particular *persons*: Have any events tallied in these several points? These are all curious enquiries, and depend on such researches as should at all events give a consequence to the investigation: researches and enquiries, which, so far from shrinking from, we claim at the hands of our adversaries, as an act of justice. And shall we still submit to be told, that our reverence for the Bible is “the effect of pre-  
“judice!” that our “faith is not rational!” that we “believe without any rational mo-  
“tives for belief,” and only on the “posi-  
“tive assertions of an assumed authority,  
“which we have never discussed, and indeed  
“durst not question!” and that, in short, our religion is only “the fruit of unenlight-  
“ened credulity! (6)”

Such misrepresentations, which have been but too common in all ages, have been more unjustifiably than ever revived of late. A celebrated seceder from the established Church, in one of his publications, is thus pleased to speak of the institution of these very lectures: “Even public lectures,” says he, “have been established, and stipends an-  
“nexed

“ nexed to the preachers of them, *not to en-*  
 “ *courage men in the study of Scriptures,*  
 “ and in interpreting them in the sense that  
 “ approved itself to *their own judgment*, but  
 “ in agreement with that which was *dic-*  
 “ *tated by others.*” And could it be then  
 to encourage the idle and unprincipled, that  
 these lectures were founded? Could they be  
 designed to sanction hypocrisy, and reward  
 ignorance? Was it to stifle learning in its  
 very cradle, and to preclude enquiry and ar-  
 gument, in contradiction to the public insti-  
 tutes of the place, which afford every en-  
 couragement, and supply every help con-  
 ductive to the proper exercise and right con-  
 duct of both? The will of the pious and re-  
 ligious Founder is no mandate: it was never  
 meant to be so; it could never operate as  
 such. It is an invitation and encourage-  
 ment, held out to those who *believe the*  
*same truths, and acknowledge the same faith,*  
 to assist in the propagation of them for the  
 behoof of others. It was manifestly so de-  
 signed; and I would venture to affirm, in  
 no one instance has the principle ever been  
 departed from(?).

Another popular writer has alleged as a  
 charge

charge against our *Universities*, that their forms of education all tend to encourage and support the "*system of permanence*," that is, to inculcate and diffuse what has been discovered of old, rather than to assist in the discovery of what remains to be known ( <sup>8</sup> ). But surely, if we have attained to any *certainty* in any science, if the human mind has reason to be satisfied as to the progress made in any branch of knowledge, this *should* be taught as *permanent*; unless some very unexpected events should occur, to overturn the principles on which it is founded. The science of astronomy, for instance, must surely be taught as settled in regard to its most important principles, by our great countryman; not however to the exclusion of any proper and just examination of those principles themselves. And can we doubt whether our most holy religion should be taught and inculcated on a footing of *permanence*, by those who are entirely satisfied with its doctrines and morality, and so assured of the authenticity of the sacred volumes, as to believe that no less than a second manifest interposition of God could ever prove them false? The question then, if it has

has

has any immediate reference to Religion, should be reduced to this : Is any thing so taught in the Universities as *permanent*, as to preclude enquiry ? Far otherwise : and it might be particularly insisted on, that even such institutions as are expressly formed for the support and defence of old establishments and received opinions, must provide for the due examination and refutation of all adverse systems : argument must be opposed to argument, testimony to testimony, criticism to criticism.

It would be well for the world, if this “system of permanence” had been universally adhered to with the same manly steadiness and cautious prudence, which have not only distinguished the Universities of this land, in these times, but the country in general. We have just cause to pride ourselves in the reflection, that *we* have not, like others, madly abandoned to the rude demands of speculators and reformers, opinions and principles, systems and institutions, sanctioned by experience, and recommended by the consent and approbation of the wise and good, and learned of all ages. We have manfully withstood the indiscriminate outcry

F 3

against

against *prejudices*, not *precluding enquiry*, but very wisely turning our enquiries on the *new* principles proposed to us. *We* were not to be deluded into the strange belief, that *indifference* to all Religion, both *speculative* and *practical*, was the best qualification for the examination of divine truths, and that all reverence and respect for the Bible were to be laid aside, before we could be competent to judge of the doctrines it contains. These *preparatives*, if not expressly insisted on, have been in more instances than one approved and recommended, as the only means of attaining to “ a rational system of faith (°).” Those who begin to argue with us by persuading us to divest ourselves of *prejudices*, should always excite our suspicion. What they call *prejudices* may be very valuable principles; and instead of securing ourselves from delusion by surrendering them at discretion, we may very possibly be parting with the best means of security against deception of the worst kind. No man comes into the world capable of helping himself; nobody comes into the world so unconnected as to depend entirely upon his own individual powers and discern-

discernment: he must require help and guidance, and to have the path of life pointed out to him, by those who have travelled the road before him. Must he neglect all such directions, and lose himself in a wilderness, in order to have a better chance of discerning his way, as the random information of those he happens to meet may seem reasonable or not? Had he not better keep steadily to the “old paths,” and be fearful of quitting them, except it shall be made *clear* and *certain*, that they *lead to destruction*? (10) Why should we *not* suspect those who would endeavour to persuade us, that ourselves, and our fathers, and our fathers’ fathers, have all been deceived; that parental care has only been exerted to seduce us into error; and that, if we will but believe this, we shall be more in the way to be happy, and better able to distinguish between truth and falsehood?

It is thus that any principles may be got rid of; and the times afford us a memorable instance of an expedient of the same nature in morals, which succeeded, to the disgrace of the age, and the disgust of every feeling mind. Under pretence of amplifying and

enlarging the glorious principle of *universal benevolence*, so perfectly and so correctly inculcated and enforced, both by precept and parable, in Christ's Gospel, every private connexion was shamefully misrepresented, and the first duties of life, the parental, the filial, the conjugal, were all trampled upon, and made a mockery of! For the *good of mankind*, as it was pretended, the son led his father to the scaffold, the father drove his son to the field, the mother beheld without lamentation the mangled carcase of the fruit of her own womb, fallen in the cause of rebellion and insurrection, and every tie of private affection and consanguinity was abandoned to riot, in the excesses of a frantic zeal, for the exaltation of the species, and the assertion of rights, entirely incompatible with the peace of society, and the security of individuals<sup>(1)</sup>.

Here was a system founded on the *overthrow* and *mockery* of *ancient prejudices*; for every *feeling* and *affection*, if fostered in the bosom of a *private* family only, was also denounced as among the *prejudices*<sup>2</sup>, which

<sup>2</sup> See *Helvetius de l'Homme*, sect. 11.



flood in the way of the system to be established, of universal *anarchy*, for such was in fact manifestly the end aimed at by those well acquainted with the plot.

We cannot wonder then, since man has been once so deluded, as to be made to abandon the first principles and feelings of his nature; to cast off all regard and affection for his offspring, all respect and reverence for the authors of his existence, all the common charities and ties of social life, if it should have been thought as easy a matter to bring him to reject the sacred truths of Revelation by representing the sacred writers to be impostors and fabulists<sup>h</sup>. It is not difficult to detect an impostor, who would persuade us that he has a commission from heaven, by a careful examination and scrutiny into his credentials: but it would be immediately repugnant to our feelings to expect to find an accredited prophet of the Most High, in a person we had been previously taught to despise. If the "*system of permanence*," with which these modern Reformers are

<sup>h</sup> See St. Basil's noble refusal to abandon *such* prejudices to Eunomius. Lib. i. p. 201. edit. Steph.

so offended, shall have taught us to reverence and respect the sacred writers, this is no prejudice that can stand in the way of truth. It is easy to call Moses a *mythologist*, and the Prophets *visionaries*; but nothing can be more difficult than to *prove* them such. The Bible is a book which claims to be judged of in a manner very different from the way too generally adopted; not in detached parts, nor as a *common* history, but as a record of events peculiarly connected in themselves, and peculiarly distinguished from any modern events, by every circumstance of time, place, custom, religion, and politics. It *professes* to be a *marvellous* account; this is its very *pretension*: but if *allegory* is to be turned into *fact*, and *fact* into *allegory*, at any man's pleasure, there is no end to the confusion it must occasion. The fruit of the tree of knowledge has been of late, more rashly than ever<sup>(12)</sup>, resolved into an allegory, and the real *origin* of *sin* thus reduced to a fable; while the *figurative* and *typical* representations, whereby the Prophets were instructed in the course of future transactions, have been exposed and ridiculed as *real* events; and this (in more instances than  
one)

one) in *direct contradiction to the Prophets' own words* (<sup>13</sup>).

Prejudices are not always *errors*, though a foreign writer of some eminence has endeavoured to identify them (<sup>14</sup>). Prejudices may be very valuable principles<sup>i</sup>, and none more so than the prejudices of a public education; a circumstance which seems to have been acknowledged by the reformers themselves, who have not neglected the aid of *national* and *revolutionary schools*, to give effect to their own boasted systems of *Truth* and *Reason* (<sup>15</sup>).

The divine authority of the *Old Testament*, through a weak spirit of accommodation and concession which has seized upon some minds, has lately been as much in danger from the *treachery of friends*, as from the assaults of enemies. We have been admonished by a *minister of Christ's Church* to lay aside all "*theological prepossessions*," concerning the *divine legation* of Moses, and *inspiration* of the Prophets, for purposes as disgraceful to the scholar, as the Christian; to accommodate ourselves to the objections of Freret,

<sup>i</sup> See Notes to *Parr's Spiritual Sermon*, p. 102.    1

Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Boulanger, Diderot, and Paine; so, says he, that we need no longer fear "*the erudition*" of the first, "*the sense*" of the second, "*the wit*" of the third, "*the scurrility*" of the fourth, "*the declamations*" of the fifth, or "*the sarcasms*" of the last ! One would scarcely conceive, after such a proposal as this, that it could be to the *Old Testament*, that Christianity makes her first appeal, and sends us for her chief credentials. No prejudices whatsoever in favour of Moses and the Prophets, which we shall have derived from our forefathers, or imbibed by education, need be suspected of biasing our judgments improperly ; for it should be remembered, that when Christianity *first* made this appeal, she was under persecution, and it was her *future* establishment that depended on the issue<sup>k</sup>. Every prejudice which is now thought to favour the Church, and to give an imaginary importance to the evidence of Scripture, was *then* against her : it was not the appeal of numerous adherents, connected by the least shadow of temporal interest, but it was the appeal of Christ *crucified* ! of impaled and

<sup>k</sup> See *Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ*, p. 197. fol. edit.

imprisoned apostles ! of a few wandering outcasts ! of dying martyrs ! and yet she *prevailed* ! Her credentials were examined and admitted ; the appeal was prosecuted, the prophecies were searched, and the Church increased daily ! And shall this evidence be *now* disputed ? Shall we be told, that it is incomplete, and must be perverted to be made to apply ? The appeal is still open. It is a curious and interesting enquiry ; but in entering upon it, let it be thought *no prejudice* ; but a measure both equitable and just, to approach these extraordinary records with reverence and respect ; remembering that if the present exalted state of the Christian Church, in these realms, has rendered them suspicious to her adversaries, the first appeal was made when the Church was in disgrace ; when the power of the mighty, and the wisdom of the wise, were against it ; when the evidences referred to were only in the hands of a despised and persecuted people, while the appeal was proposed to the whole world <sup>(16)</sup> ; to the might and majesty of ancient Rome, the learning and philosophy of Greece, to the infatuations of the Jew, the corruptions of the Pagan. These  
were

were the first to whom the evidence was offered ; and I know not what advantage any can expect to gain by decrying those prejudices (17), and that “ *system of permanence,*” which lead us to respect these sacred writings ; except indeed, which is surely the truth, they would turn us entirely aside from the consideration of them ; for if the present prejudices of respect and veneration were laid down, and the very worst prejudices of the ancient pagan world assumed in their stead, even against *these* Christianity *has* prevailed, and is entirely competent to do so still.

We appeal then with renewed confidence to the *canon of Scripture*. It is open alike to believers and unbelievers. We appeal from Christianity to Moses and the Prophets, because their evidence, when duly examined and considered, is in itself miraculous. No “ *system of permanence,*” no prejudices or prepossessions concerning the divine authority of the Hebrew writers, need stand in the way of the full discovery of truth, if the case is to be decided by fair reasoning, regular argument, and sound criticism. The common plea, that, under such circumstances, Reason  
(that

(that is always, Reason as opposed to Revelation) cannot obtain a hearing, may not any longer with propriety be urged. Reason has surely *now had* her hearing. I cannot conceive that Infidelity or Atheism could ever find more to say, than is to be found in many productions of this age of *Reason*, or that they could ever have a better opportunity of being heard: a circumstance which the author of the *Ruins of Empires*, as free a writer, and as adventurous a critic, as any the age can boast, so fully acknowledges, as to glory in the *impossibility* of any idea being any longer effectually suppressed, either by the interposition of power, or the influence of authority (<sup>18</sup>).

We may surely hope then, that this age of *freedom* will have put us in possession of every objection that can be urged against Christianity, since, by the confession of Infidels themselves, notwithstanding the continual outcry against *prejudices*, and the undue influence of authority, we find that they have been able to promulgate their sentiments without restraint and without fear. And indeed their *works* will prove it. Their works will amply shew, that, contrary to the asser-  
tion

tion of the very author whose complaints I have had particular occasion to notice in this discourse, *few* have “refrained, through fear  
“of persecution, from the publication of *un-  
“palatable* opinions, or felt *compelled* to pub-  
“lish such opinions in a *frigid* and *ænigma-  
“tical* spirit<sup>1</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> *Godwin's Pol. Just.* b. iv. c. 6.



## NOTES TO SERMON II,

---

Page 58. note (1),

*MAY* in this late contest have appeared more critical than in former ones.] It is enough for us to know that it has appeared so to those who have been most active in their opposition to revealed Religion. The more confident their expectations have been, the more conspicuous and decisive must be the triumph of Revelation. Now whatever becomes of the question, whether the French revolution was owing or not to the *conspiracies* of the *Free-Masons* and *Illuminati*, as stated by the Abbé Barruel and Professor Robison, I can feel no difficulty in referring to their very curious publications, as well as to the work, entitled, *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme, par M. l'Abbé Barruel*, in proof of the critical state in which Christianity was supposed to be by all the Deistical and Atheistical writers, whose professed object was, *de faire valoir la Raison.*" (See *Weishaupt's Letters* under the name of *Spartacus*.) It is impossible not to suppose, from the style and character of the books circulated and recommended throughout Europe at that time, that the progress of *Reason* was expected to give the finishing stroke to *Christianity*, not merely as an *established* Religion, but as a *revealed* Religion. The state of things at that time is well described by Professor Robison in his Account of the German Union. "The freedom of enquiry," says the learned Professor, "was terribly abused; (for what will the folly of man not abuse?) and degenerated into a wanton licentiousness of thought, and a rage for speculation and scepticism on every subject whatever. The struggle, which was originally between the Catholics and Protestants, had changed, during the gradual progress of luxury and immorality, into a contest  
G "between

“ between *Reason* and *Superstition*. And in this contest  
 “ the denomination of *Superstition* had been gradually  
 “ extended to *every doctrine which professed to be of di-*  
 “ *vine Revelation*, and *Reason* was declared to be for *cer-*  
 “ *tain the only way by which the Deity can inform*  
 “ *the human mind.*” *Robison’s Proofs*, p. 278. 3d edit.  
 This perhaps is as correct and as unprejudiced an ac-  
 count as could be given of the spirit of the times; and  
 whatever share these Infidel writers may have had in  
 the *political* disturbances that ensued, there can be no  
 doubt that their confidence of success against *Chri-*  
*stianity* must have been much increased by the progress  
 of the *French* Revolution, and the overthrow of the  
*Gallican Church*. What advantage they *really* expect-  
 ed to derive from the advancement of *knowledge*, it  
 may be difficult to say; but many of them seem princi-  
 pally to have fixed upon *physiology* in its different  
 branches, as most likely to afford the strongest proofs  
 against the divine authority of the Bible. Voltaire was  
 for making *physics* the touchstone of all pretended re-  
 velations. Speaking of the Koran, he says, “ On y voit  
 “ surtout une ignorance profonde de la *physique* la plus  
 “ simple et la plus connue—c’est là la *pietre de touche* des  
 “ livres que les *fausses Religions* prétendent écrits par  
 “ la Divinité.” It is not to be questioned that M.  
 de Voltaire meant in many of his writings to apply this  
 touchstone to the holy Scriptures, with a confidence in  
 its efficacy to reduce *them* to the standard of the *false*  
*Religions* he *pretended* to have in view. It is some satis-  
 faction surely to be able to refer to such advocates for Re-  
 velation as Grotius, Bacon, Selden, Puffendorf, Pascal,  
 Newton, Boyle, Locke, Addison, &c. when he adds,  
 “ le *vulgaire*, qui ne voit point ces fautes, les adore.”  
 Nothing can be more difficult than to teach modesty to  
 a *minute* philosopher. This age of Reason has produced  
 many in our own nation, who have pronounced opi-  
 nions, to be not only indefensible, but positively absurd  
 and irrational, which were unquestionably entertained,  
 and publicly avowed, by the truly learned men whose  
 names I have just mentioned: see for instance the writ-  
 ings of Dr. Toulmin, whom I shall have occasion to no-  
 tice elsewhere. Mr. Gibbon has ventured to insinuate,  
 that the reason of *such* men was *subdued*, rather than *satis-*  
*fied*.

*tisfied*. (See chap. xx. of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.) We have only to refer to their works, to see whether they were men likely to have their reason rather subdued than satisfied: it would be well for the reputation of Mr. Gibbon, if even *this* excuse could be alleged for *his* being, as he frequently is, in his works, the *advocate* of *Idolatry*. At all events it may be asserted, that Mr. Gibbon is the first who has thrown such an imputation upon them, and as it is matter of mere conjecture, it may reasonably be passed over; though we cannot refrain from saying, that no eminence which Mr. Gibbon has attained as a writer would dispose us to bow to his authority as a judge of Bacon, Newton, Boyle, &c. and as to his candour and honesty, we shall have more to say of it elsewhere.

To return to the subject we had quitted. Diderot, in his *Système de la Nature*, congratulates himself upon the probable downfall of theology from the advancement of *physical* knowledge. "*La vraie Physique ne peut qu'amener la ruine de la Théologie.*" Book i. chap. 7. But Mr. Paine goes farther, and even pretends that the point is accomplished. "The system of a *plurality of worlds*," says he, "renders the Christian system of faith at once little and ridiculous, and scatters it in the wind like feathers in the air. The two beliefs cannot be held together in the same mind; and he who thinks he believes both has thought but little of either." Mr. Paine pursues this idea at some length. I will venture to say, there is no person who *thinks he believes both* more thoroughly than the writer of this note; and indeed he *has thought a good deal about both*, notwithstanding what Mr. Paine ventures to assert. And had the above passage of Mr. Paine's occurred to him when he published a book expressly upon the subject, (A. D. 1804.) he would have been happy to have referred to it, as the best explanation of his intentions, which were certainly in *one* instance *mistaken*. [See *Critical Review* of the work, entitled, Εἰς Θεός, Εἰς Μερῖνες.] The intention of the work was *no other* than to shew, that the holy Scriptures did not *contradict* the notion of a *plurality of worlds*. Upon this subject of the *plurality of worlds*, I shall beg leave to add some references I had not an opportunity of making in the book I have just noticed,

ticed, but which are exceedingly applicable, and would in themselves be sufficient answers to the dogmatical assertion of Mr. Paine. See *Sherlock's XIth Discourse*, vol. i. p. 320. *Clarke's Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, pp. 354, 355. 8th edit. Introduction to *Dr. Thomas Burnet's book de Fide et Officiis Christianorum* (the extract from the preface found among his papers). *Gisborne's Walks in a Forest*, Walk III. *New Theory of Redemption*, published 1789. vol. ii. p. 79. &c. and *Fuller on Deism, or The Gospel its own Witness*, Part II. chap. v.

Page 58. note (2).

Upon all the subjects here enumerated, it is almost sufficient to refer to *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, 5th edition, with an Appendix by Professor Brown, on the present Times, 1798. I shall however subjoin the following notices of some French works, which, I must confess, I have had myself no opportunity of examining. "M. Bergier a fait pour la France ce que Leland avoit fait pour les trois Royaumes : il a frappé à grands coups sur le Dictionnaire philosophique; la Philosophie de l'Histoire; l'Examen important; le Sermon des Cinquante; le Christianisme dévoilé, &c. Personne jusqu'à présent n'a réfuté M. Bergier." And again, "M. Campbell dévoile les sophismes de Hume. M. le Professeur Castillon fit plus; après avoir traduit et commenté M. Campbell, il reprit en bloc tous ses argumens; il en fit, pour ainsi dire, une chaîne serrée, il pressa, il somma M. Hume de la briser, ou de se rendre. M. Hume a gardé un profond silence."

Page 60. note (3).

Nothing is more common than the revival of *old objections*, with a view to the very probable advantage of their appearing *new* to the ignorant; as Cicero says in his *Orator*, c. 3. "Ego autem et me scire nova videri dicere intelligo, cum pervetera dicam, sed inaudita plerisque." It is upon the strength of an "inaudita plerisque," that so many obsolete objections are continually revived. The learned Professor Jenkin remarks, and with much propriety, though it may not perhaps be universally admitted, that it appears from the several apologies of the Christian Fathers, in vindication

cation of our Religion, that all was at the very first alleged against it, which can with any pretence or colour be objected. Vol. ii. 403. Both Eusebius and Jerome declare of Origen's book against Celsus, that all objections that ever were, or ever may be, made to Christianity, will find an answer in it: see the former, *Advers. Hieroclem*; and the latter, *Epist. ad Mag. Orat. Roman.* See also *Leng's Boyle's Lectures*, Sermon V. 127. and the Abbé Houtteville's excellent Discourse on the writers for and against Christianity, in which is an admirable account of all the *apologetical* works, as well as of the writings they were intended to confute; and he remarks, that not one of the adversaries of Christianity ever returned to the charge. [See his account of Eusebius.] I must again refer to *Dr. Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, for an account of the several answers and replies that have been made to the numberless objections advanced against Christianity, and which, no doubt, will be continually repeated. There is not one of Paine's objections in his *Age of Reason*, that has not been refuted long ago; some of them even by Josephus in his book against Apion. I shall make no scruple of inserting the following extract from *Mr. Lackington's Confessions*, because I have no doubt but the case occurs continually; and those who are not aware of the deception may derive advantage from the hint given them. "I also procured a Bible interleaved with blank paper, and transcribed many of the remarks and objections of Infidel writers to various texts; and opposite to some texts I even wrote my own objections. Having had such a long acquaintance with the authors in favour of freethinking, I am able to remark, that Thomas Paine, and other modern Infidels, instead of consulting the Bible, have copied the objections to it, from those authors that preceded them, which objections have been ably answered over and over again, by men of deep learning and great ability. Those answers I, like other freethinkers, neglected to read, until a few years since. Now I have read them, I am ashamed of having been so easily duped, and cheated out of my Christianity." Letter II. published 1804.

Page 64. note (4).

In *the Divine Legation of Moses*, vol. iii. p. 420. there is an excellent remark on the hazard the Jewish Legislator ran in pretending to establish the belief of a theocracy, if his pretensions had been unfounded; for this could not be established without pretending also to an extraordinary and particular Providence: upon which Moses never makes any scruple to insist, by way of giving a proper sanction to his laws; appealing even to his enemies to judge. "*Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.*" Deut. xxxi.

32.

There is nothing that has been more misrepresented than the Jewish theocracy. Lord Shaftesbury certainly means to allude to it, where he enumerates among the attributes which it is hazardous to ascribe to the Deity, that of being "favourable to a few though for slight causes, and cruel to the rest." It is in this light that all Deists *will persist* in regarding it, though if the very books which record this preference are true, no such objection can lie against them; for what is it that they expressly tell us, but that God did *not* select the Israelites for their "*own sakes*," but "*for his own holy name sake*, which had been profaned among the *heathen*?" Ezekiel xxxvi. 22, 23. see also Deuteronomy ix. which is strong to the purpose. Nor need any other construction be put on the calling of Abraham, in which the whole originated: for though this may seem more personal and particular, yet there were many moral causes leading thereto, and it was undoubtedly the effect of God's foresight, as is plain from Gen. xviii. 19. If God foresaw *his* future righteousness and eminent piety, could he not foresee also the iniquity of those nations whom his posterity were to dispossess? could he not foresee all the abominations which it became so necessary afterwards to caution the Israelites against? Leviticus xviii. xix. xx. We do not pretend to enter into the question of God's foresight upon this occasion; the difficulties attending it have long been acknowledged: but all these difficulties may be said to arise, *not* from the *uncertainty* either of *man's free-will* or *God's foreknowledge*, but from the *impossibility of denying* either: there

there is no foundation therefore whatever for our doubting of God's foresight in this particular; and the author of the *History of Ancient Europe* (Dr. Russell) might have been spared the shock, that his feelings seem to have sustained in reflecting on the promise of a desirable country having been made to Abraham and his seed "before the inhabitants had become idolaters, and a prophetic curse denounced against them, before they were a people." See p. 130.

There is no doubt that before *the sentence was put in execution* they not only were become idolaters, but the most execrable of all idolaters, as may be collected from the several chapters of the book of Leviticus already referred to, and the commentators upon those chapters; Patrick especially. The conduct of the Israelites themselves God particularly expresses his foreknowledge of, Deut. xxxi. 21. "For I know their imagination, which they go about, *even now before I have brought them into the land which I swear:*" which, if Dr. Russell chose to refer to the Bible at all, should have had its proper weight with him. And I cannot help adding from the same authority, (and the Bible has at least the claim that all other books have, to be allowed to speak for itself,) that the evidence of God's foreknowledge was a matter of peculiar importance at those times, as we may see by the intimation given us of the general design of prophecy, Isaiah xlviii. 5. "I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it to thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them."

As to God's selection of the Israelites, and how much it has since been turned against the Deists, by their present state of depression and dispersion, (and this in fulfilment of the ancient prophecies,) see *Leslie's Method with the Jews*, 11th fol. edition of his works, vol. i. pp. 71, 72.

Though I have already treated pretty largely of this subject in a note to my first Discourse; yet, as there is no objection in regard to which Deists are more confident in their attacks upon the Jewish dispensation, I shall hope to be excused for offering some further re-

marks in this place; with references to a few of the authors who have written most perspicuously upon the subject, and are accessible to the generality of readers.

It is rash in man to attempt to decide what may be cruel, or not so, as a dispensation proceeding from God. In this mixed scene of things there are many evils, which cannot be corrected without the sacrifice of much present ease and present happiness. It is always sufficient for us, in passing a judgment upon such events, to be able to distinguish what will be the actual consequences. Let us suppose one man to lose a limb by violence, and through the malice and revenge of an inveterate enemy; and another by the hand of a skilful practitioner, capable of foreseeing that the loss of his limb was necessary to the preservation of the rest of the body, and of life itself: could we hesitate to decide, that in the first instance there would be much to blame; in the last, much to be even admired and commended? Shall not the foresight of the practitioner render *his* an act of kindness and benevolence? But as this may not be thought entirely to meet the case, let us suppose a man to be forewarned of his death, unless he should submit to the loss of a limb; would his death, upon his neglect of this notice, be imputable to him who gave him the advice? How the Israelites were dealt with in this respect, see 2 Kings xvii. and Patrick on the chapter. See also the exact case, Ezekiel iii. 18, 19. ib. xxxiii. 1—9. Consult also *Origen contr. Cels.* b. iv. p. 211. and b. vi. p. 314. edit. Cantab. and c. xvii. of the *Philocalia* in the same edition, p. 104.

I am not pretending to resemble God's ways to our ways, or his thoughts to our thoughts: but as it is most unquestionable, that many evil occurrences take place in the world, which the prospect of good to ensue reconciles to our feelings, so we may confidently believe, *a fortiori*, that where there is a constant and unerring foresight of consequences, many events, accompanied with the most terrifying effects to our understandings, may not be ultimately bad; and therefore it cannot be possible for us to say what may be the real nature of any events brought to pass through the express will of God. It was apparently bad for Joseph  
to



to have fallen under the displeasure of his brethren, and to have been sold to the Ishmaelites: but Joseph lived long enough to draw a different conclusion, for wisely did he comfort his repenting brethren; "As for you, *ye* thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, to *save much people alive.*" Gen. l. 20.

It is generally granted, that whatever knowledge the Israelites might have had of a future state, such a belief was not so prevalent, nor by any means so clear, before, as since the times of the Gospel. What *we* know *now* of another life to come, was in a great measure wanting in those times. The prosperity of a hardened sinner therefore is not likely now to do such mischief in the world, because we well know that there is a time to come, when God's providence will be amply vindicated; but this was not the case in the times of which the Bible gives an account. I have already taken notice, not only that the idolatrous nations of old were corrupt in their manners beyond all that we can possibly conceive, in our present state of refinement and civilization, but that their whole system of religion (and policy even) tended to a *defiance* of the supreme God. "Who is the Lord," (the God of Israel,) says Pharaoh, "that I should obey his voice?" Exod. v. 2. This is the clue to the circumstances of those times; and if we follow up the history, we shall find, I think, that there is scarcely one incident, which this matter of *defiance* will not serve to explain. The gross extravagancies of idolatry, the cruel and licentious rites attached to it, are irrefragably confirmed by every testimony of profane as well as sacred history: and if any men had been bold and virtuous enough to stem the torrent of iniquity, and assert the insulted majesty of the true God, would not Reason have been confounded, if they had been entirely abandoned, and no support afforded them on so great and glorious an occasion? We have a right to ask such questions in an age of Reason; an age, which has produced one very bold Philosopher; so bold as to argue against the very existence of God, from the *present resistance* that is made to him in the daily commission of *sin* of all sorts; and this is adduced in argument against Dr. Clarke's evidences of God's attributes; particularly

ticularly of his *infinite power*. See *Diderot's Système de la Nature*. Nay, he goes so far as to rest all his arguments against the being and providence of God, upon the very fact of *his being suffered to exist* to publish such a work.

We know from Christianity how such acts of defiance may have their due reward in time to come, and the world in general is at all events too enlightened to be seduced into *atheism* by such attempts. But this was not the case in times past. Prosperity and adversity, or rather, prosperous and adverse success in their wars and conflicts, were the only criterions of men's faith. *Whatever object* they chose to worship was acknowledged, in proportion to the temporary success that attended their several undertakings. This was their common mode of reasoning, as may be collected from every history we possess of those remote times. The express interference of God therefore was necessary to vindicate his supremacy and providence, at such times, upon the Deist's, or rather the Atheist's own principles; and indeed Diderot leaves us no alternative between the acknowledgment of God's interference on occasions, and the total denial of his providential government of the world.

The next question then is, How is this interference described to have happened? Often certainly with most dreadful displays of God's power in punishing; but might there not be *mercy* in this very *severity*? *Severity* is certainly *mercy* where nothing less will be effectual to the suppression of such iniquities and abominations, as tend to corrupt and deprave the whole of human nature.

Mr. Gibbon, speaking of Aurelian's punishments, [*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. ii. 18.] says, "a few *such* examples impressed a *salutary* consternation. His punishments were terrible, but then he "had seldom occasion to punish more than once the "same offence." Here then the principle is fully admitted as *salutary* in its consequences; and that this was the object to be obtained by the Jewish laws is evident from Deut. xiii. where, as a reason for the severity of the punishment denounced against idolaters, it is expressly said, "And all Israel shall bear and fear," and

“and *do no more* any such wickedness as this is among “you.” So again, speaking of the Canaanites, the Scripture saith, “He gave the kingdoms of Canaan to “be an heritage unto his people.” Why? That *all the nations* of the *world* might know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, and that they might fear the Lord continually: “and they joined themselves unto Baal-  
 “Peor, and provoked him with their inventions; so “the plague was great among them. Then, *being “chastised,* they turned to their God.” Such was the object of the calamities that were permitted to befall them, and such, no doubt, the means *necessary* to restrain and to convert them; or at least to prevent the contagion spreading; which nothing but the manifest correction of idolatry could accomplish, without intrenching too much on the freedom of the human mind. Much to the same purpose may be seen in the third part of *Dr. Edwards’s Preservative against Socinianism*; *Jenkin’s Reasonableness of Christianity*; (Part II. chap. 2.) *Burtbogge on the Divine Goodness*; *Nicholls’s Conferences*; *Leland’s Answer to Tindal*; *Owen’s Sermons at Boyle’s Lectures*; *Bryant on the Authenticity of the Scriptures*; and *Watson’s Apology for the Bible*. In a small work of M. Petitpierre of Neufchatel on the *Divine Goodness*, there are some good arguments to prove *severity* to be a *main branch* thereof. See also *Robert Robinson’s Sermons, Discourse on early Piety*, and *Lindsey on Divine Government*. Voltaire, that he may have an opportunity of imputing to the Jews the worst motives that he could, observes, that in order to be convinced that the idolatry of the neighbouring nations was not the true cause of their *hatred*, we need only consult their history, where we shall see that they themselves were frequently idolaters. Nobody denies this; it is what we would particularly insist on: their disposition towards idolatry was the precise occasion of God’s separating them from their neighbours with so much strictness and severity; not to encourage their *hatred* of them, but to keep them from the evil communication of their corrupt notions and practices. “After the doings of “the land of Egypt, *wherein ye dwell*, shall ye not do; “and after the doing of the land of Canaan, whither “*I bring you*, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in  
 “*their*

"*their* ordinances. Ye shall do MY judgments, and "keep MINE ordinances to walk therein. I am *the* "*Lord your God.*" Levit. xviii. 3, 4. See also Levit. xx. 26. And is it not clearly shewn in the history of the Bible, that the Israelites were punished for every instance of apostasy? Idolatry was carefully pointed out to them as the immediate object of their enmity, whether they chose to make it such or no; and this they had many opportunities of proving; whenever it turned out *not* to be the object of their designs, they were themselves checked and punished.

But let us consider, lastly, the character and conduct of the *Prophets*, for *they* were the principal ministers of God's dispensations. How then are they represented as interfering? By exposing in the sight of the infidel the error of his way, and upholding the righteous believer by the most comfortable encouragements and captivating promises. Had they made no pretensions to a commission from Heaven, we should almost have expected a visible display of God's providence in their favour, so commendable was their zeal, so important to the *whole world* the object and the course of their proceedings. See this amply proved in *Law's Theory of Religion*, Disc. II. where are to be found abundance of useful references. See also *Lowman's Dissertation on the civil Government of the Hebrews*.

I would however willingly be contented to refer to the book of Jeremiah alone, illustrated by Dean Prideaux's account of those times, in his *Connection of the Old and New Testaments*, to satisfy any reasonable and well-disposed mind, of the goodness of Providence, as displayed in the mission and interposition of the ancient Prophets. I would only wish the whole case to be considered, and then let it be said, whether in any instance the wicked were punished without sufficient warning; whether all previous pains were not taken in the case of the idolaters, to convert them to the true faith, (Jeremiah li. 8, 9.) in the case of the Israelites, to preserve them in obedience; (see Jeremiah, ch. vii.) I have offered but two references in proof; but many more might be adduced. It is besides too often overlooked, that the Israelites were particularly enjoined to offer peace to the Canaanites, on condition that they re-  
nounced

nounced their false Deities, and acknowledged Jehovah for their only God. See Deut. xx. 10. Nor was war to be commenced, till *such terms* had been rejected. See a note to Dr. Henry Owen's 12th Sermon at Boyle's Lecture, and Jenkin's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion, Part II. ch. ii. It is also to be observed, that God's conduct towards the Israelites was generally known to the Gentile nations, and this alone ought to have operated as a warning. See Numbers xiv. 14, 15. Deut. ii. 25. Joshua ii. 10. 1 Sam. iv. 10. vi. 6.

Page 65. note (5).

They prophesied of many facts; many connected facts; Have any such taken place? See the several distinct prophecies relating to our Saviour enumerated and brought together in the *Pensées de Pascal*, xv. *Leslie's Method with the Jews*, xii. and his *Truth of Christianity demonstrated*, p. 140. fol. edit. of his works. They are well summed up in *Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho*, and his *Apology to Antoninus*, and by others of the apologetical Fathers. But I shall add the following more accessible references. *Jenkin's Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, Part II. ch. v. and ch. xii. *Bryant on the Authenticity of the Scriptures*. *Jamieson on the Use of Sacred History*, vol. i. part 1. §. 2. and *Fuller's Gospel its own Witness*, Part II. ch. i.

Such an accumulation of prophecies, distinctly fulfilled, might surely have inclined Rousseau to trust a little to their evidence. He requires three things to make a prophecy credible, the conjunction of which he conceives impossible. First, that we should be witnesses to the prophecy; secondly, to the accomplishment of it also; and thirdly, that it should admit of demonstration, that the prophecy and event could not have coincided by any accidental circumstances. See his *Emile*, tom. iii. 103.

Could Rousseau imagine a prophecy more credible, if accomplished in the very lifetime of the prophet, than six or seven hundred years after his death? Could he think that he did justice to the evidence of prophecy, by resting its validity on one individual instance of a prediction verified by the event? That one prophecy might be accidentally verified is no argument one way or

or the other. This is what none would deny: but *one* prophecy may, by the addition of *circumstantial marks*, be multiplied into many. That the Jews should be dispersed might have been accidentally fulfilled; but that they should be scattered and sifted among the nations, without head or government, be a by-word and a reproach, and that this dispersion should take place at a time and after a manner marked and specified by the clearest notices, this must not be called *one* prophecy, though it relates to *one* event. See *Hurd on Prophecy*, Sermon. iv. p. 111. and *Prideaux on Daniel's Prophecy*, in the 1st vol. of his *Connexion &c.* See also *Jortin's Discourses on the Truth of the Christian Religion*, p. 177. note, 2d edit.

Such prophecies as these are not individual predictions in any sense of the word, and therefore *such* a prophecy as Rousseau would dispute the truth of, any body else would also. He totally passes over the evidence *we* depend upon; namely, an *accumulation* of *many successive* prophecies, uttered by *many different* prophets, "at sundry times, and in divers manners," most circumstantially fulfilled, though marked by various designations of time, place, and persons.

Mr. Paine, in the first part of his *Age of Reason*, has a curious way of getting rid of the proof from prophecy. He tells us, in his great wisdom, that we mistake the meaning of the name; that the Jewish Prophets were not altogether the foretellers of future events, or rather, that they were *merely* "*poets*, and therefore," says he, "it is altogether unnecessary to offer any observations upon what those men, *styled Prophets*, have written. The axe goes at once to the root, by shewing that the original meaning of the word has been mistaken." According to this very wise argument, no poet could be a prophet, no prediction could be expressed in poetical numbers. We are happy to reflect, that Bishop Lowth thought otherwise, and that he was quite as competent as Mr. Paine to judge of the original meaning of the term used for a prophet.

It is shocking to see such attempts made to deceive the unlearned, and they cannot be too often pointed out, though otherwise quite beneath our notice. See Mr. Paine well exposed for his attack upon the ancient  
pro-

prophecies, in *Fuller's Gospel its own Witness*, to which I have often had occasion to refer, and which is an excellent antidote to the poison of modern Deism.

Page 66, note (6).

See Dr. Geddes's Introduction to his *Version of the Pentateuch*, where is the following extraordinary passage: "On the whole then, I think it may be laid down as an axiom, that the bulk of Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, cannot be said to have a rational faith, because their motives of credibility are not rational motives, but the positive assertions of an assumed authority, which they have never discussed, or durst not question: their religion is the fruit of unenlightened credulity. A very small number of curious and learned men only have thoroughly examined the motives of their religious belief, in any communion; and it will be found, I presume, that the more curious and learned they were, the less they generally believed. Hence perhaps the old adage, *Ignorance is the mother of Devotion*." pp. 5, 6. Mr. Gibbon had no better excuse to make for Newton, Boyle, &c. being believers, than that their reason was rather subdued than satisfied. He was willing to acknowledge that otherwise they were *great men*, as generally reputed to be. But Dr. Geddes presumes farther. Notwithstanding the great reputation of the believers alluded to, for *learning* and useful *curiosity*, he would insinuate, that infidelity could be the only proof of either; and proposes a criterion, which would leave Bacon, Newton, Boyle, Locke, and numberless others that might be mentioned, to take their place in the lowest rank of *plebeian philosophers*. If Ignorance is the only parent of *Devotion*, we could little have expected it to spring up in such soils; still less could we have supposed, that *Devotion* would have furnished many critics fully capable of detecting the errors, into which the learned translator himself had fallen. See the Reviews in general of Dr. Geddes's work; particularly the *British Critic*; *Professor Findlay on the Inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures*; and some very brief but excellent remarks on *Dr. Geddes's Prefaces*, by the Rev. John Earle. London, 1799.

Page

## Page 67. note (7).

See *Lindsey's Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine*, &c. London, 1783. It is not the Lecture founded by Mr. Bampton only, but Lady Moyer's Lecture in the metropolis, and "some appointments of "the like sort among Dissenters," that Mr. Lindsey objects to; and, to take his own account of matters, his objections all proceed from a jealousy of having the Trinitarian or Athanasian doctrine (as he constantly terms it) so generally inculcated. But had any person founded a Lecture for *Unitarian* teachers, we may reasonably conclude Mr. L. would have had no such objections; for in his preface he expressly condemns the Universities for *discouraging* the propagators of such doctrines. "Instructors," says he, "not of one or two "individuals only, but of successive numbers, in a long "series, of ingenuous youth; whose wide dispersion "and various future distinction might effectually contribute to spread *light* and *truth* through the world." Pref. p. xxiv. It is evident then that Mr. Lindsey thinks it commendable to assist in the propagation of *light* and *truth*; we have only therefore to claim for Mr. Bampton and Lady Moyer the common right of being allowed to judge what is *light* and *truth*, and their care to propagate them cannot but be highly commendable upon Mr. Lindsey's own principles.

## Page 68. note (8).

See *Godwin's Political Justice*, chapter on *National Education*. I apprehend Mr. Godwin could never mean, that what has been discovered of old should not be inculcated and diffused, merely because it was discovered of old. He could only mean then, that the discovery of new things ought to be more promoted in the Universities, and that too great regard is at present shewn to ancient systems. To prove this point, it would be incumbent on Mr. Godwin to tell us what branches of knowledge he thinks capable of improvement, and that due assistance is not provided in the Universities for facilitating *such* improvements. Now to speak of Oxford more particularly, public lectures are there read in *Anatomy*, (as important a study, and  
where



where discoveries might be as valuable, as in any science whatsoever). There are public lectures in *Botany*, *Chemistry*, *Mineralogy*, *Astronomy*, and *Natural Philosophy*. And I will venture to say, that every one of these Lectures is so conducted, as not only amply to teach what *has been discovered*, but to encourage and assist every ingenious and attentive student in prosecuting his own studies, with a view to the further improvement and advancement of the several sciences.

So far from any of these sciences being taught on a "*system of permanence*," any person who will take the pains to enquire may easily satisfy himself, that they are all taught and inculcated as fully upon Mr. Godwin's own favourite system of *perfectibility*, as he himself could in reason desire. And these are all sciences, which we admit are to a certain degree *improveable*.

But Mr. Godwin is not a teacher of any of *these* sciences, nor much interested, probably, in *their* improvement. He is a teacher of *Political Justice*, of *Natural Religion*, and *Moral Philosophy*: and *these* he thinks improveable, as fully as *we* think the others to be. Political Justice we leave to him to advance as much as ever his talents will enable him: we believe it to be well understood by our legislators in general; and if not advanced to the highest degree of perfection, we are certain that our most glorious constitution has left the door open for any truly practicable improvements, and that any that are really such stand a fair chance of being adopted.

As to *Natural Religion* and *Moral Philosophy*, we must beg leave to demur: these we look upon as both of them interwoven with the general doctrines of Christianity; and Christianity we believe to be OF GOD. Therefore we look to *no* improvements in these two branches of knowledge, [see *Hall's Fast Sermon*, 1804. p. 38. 3d edit.] except such as may be entirely practical. We teach and inculcate *these* upon "*a footing of permanence*;" but so far from precluding *enquiry* into the principles of either, that every branch of knowledge, requisite to the due understanding of every question connected with them, is particularly taught and particularly insisted on, as the fittest qualification for academical honours and academical degrees. Mr. God-

win may depend upon it, that the course of studies recommended and adopted in the University at present, is capable of rendering any man a fit judge of *his* compositions, however scientific; and that if they are not received there with the fervour of admiration Mr. G. had been led to expect, it is because, upon examination, they have not been thought deserving of it.

Mr. Godwin has talents; his books have acquired a name, and considerable reputation, and have no doubt been as much read at Oxford as in any other city of the world; and perhaps more read there than any where, if we except Cambridge, and the Irish and Scotch Universities; in none of which we believe any work of such notoriety and upon such a subject would stand a chance of being overlooked.

Mr. Godwin will, no doubt, resort to the favourite plea of prejudice, which we shall have to speak of elsewhere; for the present we quit this subject with a most earnest hope, that none of Mr. Godwin's insinuations will lead the world in general to suppose, that *national education* is not as well understood in the several Universities of the King's dominions, as by the ingenious, but too often dogmatical and mistaken, author of *Political Justice*, &c. &c.

Page 70. note 9.

Dr. Geddes's best hope of introducing his free interpretation of the Bible to public notice is, that it may find readers disposed "to weigh his arguments in "the scale of *reason*, devoid of *theological prepossessions*;" and the Doctor is not backward to explain what *theological prepossessions* he wishes removed out of his way; such, in short, as lead us to regard the sacred writers of the Old Testament as any thing better than the "rude "unpolished" propagators of "popular traditions and "old songs." *Preface*, p. iii. He would have us look upon "the Hebrew Scriptures" as "erroneous, inconsistent, and absurd;" p. xi. as "inexplicable, and "sometimes ridiculous." p. xiii. These are Dr. Geddes's *preparatives*. The preparative of "*indifference*" I conceive to be recommended by Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, in the following passages. Speaking of the *converts* to his own way of thinking, the former says,

says, "It cannot be denied, that many of those who judge so *truly* concerning *particular tenets* in religion, have attained to that cool unbiassed temper of mind in consequence of becoming more *indifferent* to religion in general, and to all the modes and doctrines of it." And this indifference to *all religion* he considers as favourable to a distinguishing between truth and falsehood." *Discourses on various Subjects*, p. 65. The latter, (Mr. Belsham,) in his Sermon on the *Importance of Truth*, affirms, that "men who are the most indifferent to the *practice* of religion, and whose minds therefore are least attached to any set of principles, will ever be the first to see the absurdity of a popular superstition, and to embrace a *rational system of faith*."

As these passages have been selected before in proof of what they are here applied to attest, and as upon that occasion complaint was made, that the authors had been misrepresented, I must beg leave to refer to the IVth Letter of the second edition of Mr. Fuller's *Comparison of the Calvinistic and Socinian Systems*, where the point is discussed at length.

Page 71. note (10).

Rousseau (*Emile*, tom. iii. 115.) asks; why, "if a *Christian* should be thought to do well by following the faith and profession of his fathers, the same should not be thought of the *Turk*?" We do not dispute the inference he would draw; but in endeavouring to convert a Turk, we would maintain, that it is not a right method to begin with ridiculing Mahomet, and laughing at the credulity of his forefathers. Let the Turk respect Mahomet as a prophet, and the Koran as true, till the former is clearly shewn not to have been a prophet, and the latter is convicted of falsehood and error.

M. Rousseau defies "tous les *intolérans* du monde de répondre à cela rien qui contente un homme sensé." We join with him, and claim no more for ourselves than what he would claim for the Turk: that prejudices, which are really groundless and hurtful, should be removed, not by clamour, mockery, and contempt, but by sober reason and irresistible arguments.

*Page 72. note (11).*

In the *Jacobin* club at Paris, the members were sworn to denounce to the club every man who should oppose *its decrees*, whether friend or relation, father, mother, sister, or brother.

*Page 74. note (12).*

*The fruit of the tree of knowledge has been of late, more rashly than ever, resolved into an allegory.]* The close connection to be traced between the *redemption* and the *fall* of man, had long ago determined all sincere Christians to resist every attempt to allegorize this most important history; not to support their own private opinions and particular tenets, but for a reason that no true Christian could be suspected of disregarding; namely, the solemn references made to it as to a true history by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14. and by our blessed Lord and Saviour himself, Matth. xix. 4, 5. But according to Dr. Teller of Berlin, and other foreign expositors, these references were only to mere "*fragments of some unknown writer*;" "*Egyptian or Chaldean fables.*" According to Dr. Geddes, only to "*an ingenious piece of ancient mythology*;" "*popular traditions, and old songs!*" See Note 1.

*Page 75. note (13).*

*Have been exposed and ridiculed as real events, &c.]* M. de Voltaire pretends to believe, that Ezekiel eat the roll of parchment *in reality*; which the Prophet expressly asserts to have been a mere vision. See *Lettres de quelques Juifs Portugais*, &c. where is much more to the same purpose. He even, through a wanton desire of exposing the Jews, affirms boldly, that they were *Anthropophagi*, and cites to this purpose Ezekiel xxxix. 17, 18; from which passage it is impossible not to be able to collect the express views of the Prophet, which had no relation whatever to *men*, but to the *fowls of the air*, and the *beasts of the field*, as represented in vision, and by a most sublime figure.

*Page*

## Page 75. note (14.)

See "*Les Préjugés Détruits*," by F. M. Lequinio, Paris, 1793. To prove his point of prejudices being *errors*, he remarks, that, like the prejudices in favour of *astrology* and *ghosts*, "the prejudice of *nobility* was general throughout France three years ago; now it is "*perfectly annihilated by a decree.*" What would M. Lequinio now say of the *prejudice* for *royalty*, which also some years ago was thought to be *perfectly annihilated* in France, by many different decrees?

## Page 75. note (15).

It is remarkable, that M. Dupont's famous speech in the National Convention at Paris, 1792, in which he declared himself to be an *Atheist*, had for its principal subject the institution of public schools for the education of youth; and he particularly expresses a hope in his speech, that a crowd of disciples from all parts of Europe would flock to partake of the instructions of French Atheists, and that these "*young strangers, imbibing such principles, on their return to their respective countries, might spread the same lights, and operate, for the happiness of mankind, revolutions similar to that of France, throughout the world.*" Have we not reason to rejoice in having rejected *such* systems of *perfectibility*? See Mrs. Hannah More's remarks on this speech, p. 24.

M. Volney's *Law of Nature*, or sequel to his *Ruins of Empires*, was called *The Catechism of a French Citizen*. I am very sorry to say I have an *English* translation of this book, in which the title is proposed to be changed for *The Catechism of good Sense and good People*. I have carefully read it, and find much in it that is contrary to *common sense*, and much that is entirely opposite to *truth*.

## Page 77. note (16).

*While the appeal was proposed to the whole world.]* Upon the word *appeal* it has been well said by Dr. Jenkin,

vol. i. 309, that "the history of Christ, (many of the "most considerable things being done in the sight of "enemies,) though an *history* to future ages, was rather an *appeal* to that very age, whether the facts "were true or not." And again, vol. ii. 403. "Our "religion appeared in a time the most unlikely for an "imposture to pass undiscovered, and therefore the "most seasonable for truth to manifest itself; since that "must needs be true, which neither learning, nor prejudice, nor vice, nor interest could prove false." As to the obstacles in the way of the first promulgation of Christianity, see them well summed up in *Salisbury's Translation of Bullet's Heathen Testimonies*, pp. 127, &c.

*Page 78. note (17).*

Before we are led to abandon the faith of our forefathers, in consequence of the clamour of the times against *prejudices*, we should do well to consider St. Austin's account of his being seduced into the error of the Manichees. "Quid enim aliud me cogebat, an- "nos fere novem, *spreta religione* quæ mihi *puerulo a "parentibus* insita erat, homines illos sequi et diligenter audire, nisi quod *nos superstitione* terreri, et fidem "nobis *ante rationem imperare* dicerent. *Se autem*, nulum premere ad fidem, nisi discussa et enodata veritate: Quis non his pollicitationibus alliceretur? *Aug. de Utilitate credenti*, cap. 1.

*Page 79. note (18).*

Helvetius makes the following remarks on the times. "Ce siècle est, dit-on, le siècle de la Philosophie. "Toutes les nations de l'Europe ont en ce genre produit des hommes de génie: toutes semblent aujourd'hui s'occuper de la recherche de la Vérité. Mais "dans quel pays peut-on impunément la publier? il "n'en est qu'un; c'est l'Angleterre." After this was written, all restraints were taken away abroad, while England had the good sense to interpose some salutary checks. Nevertheless, *Infidel Reason* had her hearing in all countries. I question whether Atheism could  
ever

ever have more to urge than is to be found in Diderot's *Système de la Nature*, or infidelity and blasphemy more than we have in Mr. Paine's *Age of Reason*, which, however suppressed by public authority, was long enough extant for examination, and has been accordingly most ably and repeatedly answered.





---

## S E R M O N III.

---

2 ESDRAS iv. 12.

*Then said I unto him, It were better that we were not at all, than that we should live still in wickedness, and to suffer, and not to know wherefore.*

WE cannot wonder that the origin of evil should in all ages have been a subject of most curious and anxious enquiry. That an imperfect work should come from the hands of a perfect Being must always have seemed to imply a contradiction; and yet such is the construction we are compelled to put upon the present appearances of things. The existence of God, few, if any, can possibly doubt; and the existence of evil, both moral and physical, none can pretend to deny. To make God the immediate author of evil cannot fail to shock every thinking mind; and yet, to refer it to any cause independent of God, must needs be still more repugnant to  
our

our feelings. And what comfort can there be in either case? If God is the author of evil in this world, why not in other worlds<sup>a</sup>? If now, why not for ever and ever? If there exists any independent cause of evil, how is the world ever to be set free from its tyranny? (1) If the existence of evil is indispensably necessary, how is this necessity ever to be overcome?

There can be no comfort then derived either from the Manichean scheme of two principles, or the Platonic doctrine of the necessary imperfection of matter, both of which long survived the introduction of Christianity, and were, as is well known, the leading features in most of the oriental, and even later, heresies. In either system, it is true, there is an appearance of reverence for the Deity, which may seem to extenuate its errors. In regard to the last more particularly, matter is so distinct from, and so incapable of comparison with, any purely spiritual existence, that perhaps of all philosophical guesses concerning the origin of evil, it was the least offence to refer it to

<sup>a</sup> See *Law's Theory of Religion*, p. 240.

matter, as arising from the very necessity of its subordinate and imperfect nature : but if matter is *so incapable of perfection* as to be the very *cause of evil*, what are we to think, not of this present state only, but of any future one ? for neither Reason nor Revelation will teach us that matter is to be annihilated. From Revelation we learn the very contrary ; for though we read that the present “ heavens and earth shall pass away,” we are yet taught to expect “ a new heaven “ and a new earth<sup>b</sup>.” Though we read that this “ corruption must put on incorruption, “ and this mortal immortality<sup>c</sup>,” yet we are taught to believe that there will be a resurrection of the *flesh*, on purpose that “ every “ one may receive the things done in his “ *body*.”

Reason will scarcely teach us that matter will be annihilated ; for Reason, unenlightened by Revelation, has been led to deny the very possibility of its non-existence, and consequently of its creation. We have no proof then, that I can find, of any essential evil inherent in matter ; an opinion, which led the

<sup>b</sup> 2 Peter iii. 12, 13.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xv.

Gnostics to deny the resurrection of the body : of its *subordination* to spiritual substances, a right apprehension of the distinction between our own souls and bodies ought sufficiently to assure us ; though philosophical proofs without number of this *subordination*, *inferiority*, and *dependence* of matter are certainly not wanting. Subordination however does not necessarily imply positive imperfection ; a mistake which lies at the foundation of another eminent solution of the origin of evil, that I mean of a *scale of Beings*, and which has undoubtedly a similar tendency to preclude all hope of future improvement<sup>d</sup>.

But to return. The difficulties attending this great question are obvious enough ; and indeed the existence and attributes of God, the immortality of the soul, the origin of evil, and the removal of its effects, all involve questions, concerning which any truly wise and modest man would not only desire, but I may certainly add, *expect* also, to be supernaturally informed.

While the rest of the Pagan world were

<sup>d</sup> *New Theory of Redemption*, vol. ii. 165. 229.

eager to follow their own inventions, Socrates and Plato could acknowledge the blindness of human nature, and the necessity of a divine instructor : and so superior did Cicero esteem their judgment to be in all such matters, that he expresses a degree of indignation at the very thought of the name of philosopher being bestowed on those self-sufficient reasoners, who pretended to see further than the two great Sages of ancient Greece\*. But may we not with still greater propriety dispute the wisdom of such as yet refuse to be enlightened by the truths contained in the sacred writings ? for, in regard to the origin of evil in particular, it must be evident, that if the Scriptures are of any authority, all the difficulties above enumerated are solved at once.

God is there represented as the author of evil, in the only sense in which it is possible he should be ; as allowing the *possibility* of evil, that man might enjoy the inestimable gift of free will. From the abuse of free will in a being of a higher order, we have intimation of an *opposing* principle, but of

\* *Tuscul. Disput.* lib. i. 23. See also lib. iii. 1.

*no independent* one (<sup>2</sup>). As soon as we hear of him in the Bible, we read of his dependence on the Supreme, his subjection to his irresistible power and will. As soon as we read of him as an enemy to our nature, we have intimation of God's protection against him. And it is the same in regard to *earthly* things: as soon as we read of the introduction of evil, and the corruption of matter, and the dissolution of the body, we have intimation of a remedy; we are taught to regard them not as evils of necessary permanency, but as recoverable and temporary.

But this beautiful and satisfactory solution of all our doubts and difficulties, concerning the origin of evil, being by the author of the Pentateuch necessarily expressed, not *fabulously*, *μυθικῶς*, but yet, *ἐν μύθεσσι ὁρήματι*<sup>1</sup>, as it were, in terms and descriptions so little correspondent to present experience, as to *resemble* fable more than fact; it has been one of the concessions most peremptorily demanded of us of late, that we should agree to acknowledge it to be no better than a mythological representation of things, a de-

<sup>1</sup> *Aristot. Metaphys. βιβλ. γ'. κεφ. η'.* in fine.

scription “merely imagined to account for  
“known phænomena.”

That there is an air of mythology runs through the Mosaic account of the genesis, and fall of man, it would be quite unnecessary to deny ; for how could the relation of such events be kept free from the *marvellous* ? <sup>(3)</sup> Who could expect to have the creation, the origin of man, and the origin of evil, described as facts at all familiar to us ? Must not they all be events so impossible for us to have any present experience of, that as far as fable is beyond the bound of experience, so far the utmost truth in such a history must have a fabulous cast. The world is eternal or created ; if created, its creation must have been prior to all the ordinary processes of nature. Man and other animals and vegetables were always propagated according to the present mode, (which would appear to be a physical impossibility,) or the act of creation preceded this method, and must have been extraordinary and miraculous. Evil was always in the world, and the whole visible scene of things imperfect from eternity, or there must have been a period for its introduction, adequate causes lead.

leading thereto, and reasonâble grounds for its existence.

It was the design of Celsus, as Origen tells us<sup>§</sup>, to attack Christianity through Judaism ; that, by invalidating the authority of Moses and the Prophets, he might sap the foundations on which the Gospel stands. This method has been continually resorted to since by Deists and Infidels, but it was reserved for our own times to see these sacred authorities slighted and abandoned both by Jews and Christians. It is well known in what terms a celebrated translator has spoken of the author of the Pentateuch (<sup>4</sup>), to the surprise of all true Christians ; and a recent transaction on the continent has brought as much disgrace on the Jewish synagogue. I allude to an extraordinary memorial presented to a very conspicuous member of the Christian church in the kingdom of Prussia (<sup>5</sup>), by some Jews ; in which, under a hope of bettering their condition in society, they freely offer to renounce all belief in the divine legation and inspiration of Moses. As the object in the latter case was confessedly a

§ *Origen contr. Cels.* lib. i. edit. Cantab. p. 17.



worldly one, I do not mean to dwell on it; besides that an admirable reply to their strange memoir upon the subject has already appeared, and I have no particular information to state as to the event; but in regard to the concessions proposed by the celebrated translator and commentator alluded to, it should surely be enough to know that they cannot be acceded to, but in contempt of the positive declarations of our blessed Lord himself.

The strict connection between the Old and the New Testaments, between the fall and redemption of man, our Lord himself has taught us to acknowledge and maintain (<sup>6</sup>); and what becomes, (I say it with submission,) what becomes of HIS wisdom, and purity, and excellence, if he could regard with so much respect what modern Philosophy has learnt to despise? His wisdom, and purity, and excellence, as collected from the histories of his life, I believe none are disposed to dispute; and in those histories we read that HE declared, that though "one were to rise from the dead," he could not instruct us better than Moses and the

Prophets<sup>h</sup>. There we read, that to the incredulous Jews our Saviour asserted, that had *they* “believed in *Moses*, they would have “believed HIM<sup>i</sup>.” There we read, that upon the most awful and solemn occasion possible, when he had to subdue the last prejudices of his disciples, and to convince them of the truth and design of all that had befallen him, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself, beginning at *Moses* and all the Prophets<sup>k</sup>. Nor is the connection between the two covenants all that is determined by these declarations of our blessed Lord; but it is well to remark besides, since St. Paul’s authority has been disputed by the same adventurous critic, in regard to the inspiration of the Jewish canon, that these references of our Saviour establish the point beyond all controversy; for how could *Moses* and the Prophets have testified of HIM, but by inspiration from heaven<sup>l</sup>?

<sup>h</sup> Luke xvi. 31.

<sup>i</sup> John v. 46.

<sup>k</sup> Luke xxiv. 27.

<sup>l</sup> See *Earle’s Remarks*, p. 62. and *Professor Findlay* on 2 Tim. iii. 16. in answer to Dr. Geddes, published 1803.

In what light then can we regard the bold assumption of the celebrated translator, that to acknowledge the history of the fall to be no better than “ an ingenious piece of “ ancient mythology, and to compare Moses “ to Pilpay and Æsop, is by no means to “ weaken the authority of Scripture ?” To me it appears, I must confess, not only that the authority of Scripture would be weakened by such an interpretation, but that if the history of the fall is by any means capable of such a construction, we might as well be without any Revelation at all. For, as my text expresses it, “ It were better that we “ were not at all, than that we should live “ still in wickedness, and to suffer, and not “ to know wherefore.”

When we take a Pagan mythology to pieces, we come perhaps to something like the truth. Osiris turns out to be the sun, and Isis the moon ; but the sun and moon are realities, and we are content to rest where this solution of the allegory leaves us. But let the serpent stand for our unruly appetites, and the tree of knowledge for our consciences, and what do we learn thence ? Still have we to enquire, why have we un-

ruly appetites ? why do our consciences so affect us ? If the serpent is supposed to be a figure only, for temptations in general, and the tree of knowledge for the fruits and consequences of sin, we must look further for the literal sense of these very things so represented by allegory : for what could operate as temptations to the Protoplasts of man ? How could compliance with any desires become sin ? or how could sin produce pain ? Pain of conscience I mean ? We must still search for evil, such evil as should induce pain of conscience, in some contradiction to an express law ; otherwise remorse of conscience, and pain, and sin, are all idle words. So that if these representations of Moses are but figures, they cover no literal truths : if the account of the fall be an allegory, it is an allegory without a key. It may seem to explain present appearances, while we consent to call sin the transgression of a law ; but without the tree of knowledge there was then no law ; without the serpent no temptation. Such a law as the Apostle represents to have been written in the hearts of the Gentiles by the finger of God, would in the case of the Protoplasts have been  
without

without an object. The rest of mankind must have been born, and civil society established, and property distinguished, before the first human pair could have become moral creatures, and then not the whole of the Decalogue could have applied to them. *Before* these events, not one law of the Two Tables could have applied to their conditions, as must be evident to any person capable of reflection<sup>m</sup>.

Celsus then was much nearer the truth than he apprehended, when he alleged that the Mosaic history did not admit of being allegorized, or rather resolved into allegory<sup>n</sup>; and his learned antagonist needed not to have been so forward to express his jealousy, that what was easily granted in the case of the Egyptian and Grecian mythologies should be denied to the cosmogony and fall, as described by Moses: for it is certainly not a fanciful representation of the creation of man, and the origin of evil, that *we want*; but the *exact and positive history of those events*, as the first and indisputable foundations of religious and moral responsibility.

<sup>m</sup> Vid. *Theodoretum* πρὸς ἀπονομίαν, λογ. ι'. p. 250.

<sup>n</sup> *Origen contr. Cels.* lib. iv.

I know it will still be repeated, that Christianity will answer many of its most important ends, standing alone. This is certainly true: the exquisite morality of its precepts and rules of conduct; the annunciation of a future life, where it is believed, will remain for our instruction and our comfort. Our Saviour's bright example will remain to animate and encourage us; but the whole that relates to our redemption, in the atonement made for sin, as a dispensation of salvation from the foundations of the world, is gone!

Those persons waste their time greatly, who would pretend to reduce the question, concerning the utility and necessity of Revelation, to a mere question of morals. Our answer to such a question is not to be sought for in any laboured comparison, too often obtruded upon us, of Christian and Pagan morals, revealed and philosophical doctrines: the indisputable superiority of sanctions and motives, in the case of a revealed religion, is entirely sufficient to meet every objection drawn from the capacity of the human mind, and competency of reason, to discover a rule of life. In the way of speculation,

tion, we may multiply precept upon precept, and maxim upon maxim; but the will and authority to *enforce* such decrees must still be wanting°.

Redemption from sin and death is at all events a distinct matter; this *must* be, if at all, according to *God's own* purposes. Reason can never prove to a man that he needs no redemption, nor yet can it ever point out to him what will be efficacious to redeem him from sin and death (°), provided the necessity of redemption should be admitted. Here then is a question of utility quite distinct from every other; which must in no case be lost sight of, and which begins with the Bible. This is a question, which cannot depend on man's discoveries, or his powers of reason, but on his feelings and his necessities. Let a man be ever so persuaded that he may of himself discover a rule of life, this further question will still remain; Is this all that man stands in need of<sup>p</sup>? Now I will venture to assert, that this is a question which

• See the Notes to *King's Origin of Evil*, p. 66. Note X. i.

<sup>p</sup> See *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, Letter xxvii. p. 63. 5th edit.

man *cannot* resolve. In the books of the Old and New Testament we read of redemption being necessary ; man cannot say it is not ; therefore the utility of the doctrine must stand or fall with the books in which it is contained. A man's saying he needs no redemption cannot possibly amount to any argument against the *authenticity of the Scriptures* ; and if the Scriptures are true, man *does* need redemption, for they say so.

Morality is of so much importance in this life, of so much consequence in a worldly view, that the very worst of men must wish, under some circumstances, that the precepts of the Gospel were of universal obligation. As a code of moral laws, therefore, none will be disposed to reject it : but to assert, that in the mere morality of the Gospel consists the whole of Christianity, must be either a gross misconception, or a most perverse misrepresentation of matters (<sup>8</sup>).

The Gospel *alone may tell* us what we are to do ; but it is only in conjunction with the Old Testament, from which it never should be separated, that it tells us what we are. Thus connected it gives us that account of the species, which it would not only be vain, but



but entirely absurd to seek for otherwise. No philosophical investigation of matters can ever instruct us thoroughly either in the origin of man, or the origin of evil. If we will not be informed of these matters historically (°), and I may add, in regard to the creation at least, supernaturally, we must be contented to be ignorant; and what is more, we should be contented to be silent: for surely we have great reason to complain, when metaphysicians *pretend* to instruct the world upon *these* points. If they can prove the Scriptures not to be authentic, they are free to do it; but even this would confer no value on their speculations: moral theories and physical theories of the world are equally useless and precarious, when once we quit the light of Revelation, and the testimony of history. Naturalists indeed may speculate on the origin of this visible world at their will; for we shall assuredly conduct ourselves the same, whether the globe we dwell on shall be thought to have originated from a chaotic mass, or to have been struck from the sun by collision with a comet: but let us once be persuaded that evil is inevitable, and that all our actions flow from necessity, and  
the

the consequences are obvious. And if the time and occasion would serve, I could shew at length, that there is no one doubt or difficulty, which formerly served to perplex and embarrass these questions and enquiries, from which men have, in this celebrated age, been able to extricate themselves. We are still disputing as much as ever, not only about the freedom or necessity of human actions, (which will be the subject of a future discourse,) but about their moral fitness and unfitness; the operation and effects of motives; the true distinction between substance and idea; the fallibility of our faculties and senses, even to the doubt, and sometimes to the very denial, of the existence of matter; though with some, on the contrary, *every thing* is material, even the *human soul*. If the moral fitness and unfitness of actions may be thought in any instance to be duly determined, still are we left in want of any clear perception of the obligation that is to govern us; for obligation, in the abstract, is itself among those things, whose nature, foundation, force, I had almost said whose very existence has been as much questioned by modern metaphysicians, as any other point whatsoever.

We

We need not then wait for any *Age of Reason* to enlighten us upon these points; for we may depend upon it, that the further we recede from the first beginning of things, the more vain all such researches will be. Let us remember what it is we are enquiring after. We do not want to be told that man exists, that he is a dependent being, that he is subject to both moral and physical ills: we require to be informed, not so much what man is, as what he has been, and is to be. We want to know, if I may with proper reverence so express myself, what was in the contemplation of the Creator when he first made man; what intimation he gave him of his condition and future destiny; or whether any such intimation was ever given (<sup>10</sup>). We want not to be told, that there is a God above us, and evil around us; but we want to know how these are to be reconciled. They will not be reconciled by any measures of compensation and mercy in store, *without further explanation*; for *thus* both compensation and mercy would seem reflections on the Deity, who might have made us so as not to stand in need of either. If God has spoken to us, then compensation and mercy  
may

may be brought into the system with the most glorious effect : but if we are neither assured that God has accounted to us for the existence of evil, nor taught us how to exercise the faculties he hath endowed us with ; both compensation for our sufferings, and mercy for our failings, would be our very birthright, and God would appear a debtor to the work of his own hands<sup>a</sup>.

From the account that Moses has given, we may learn that God, when he made the first rational inhabitant of this earth, gave a rational account of his holy will and design. He gave a law, when he gave being, and both compensation and mercy, if I may so express myself, were *first* in his divine system ; for our free will (if not as an instrument of happiness universally, yet as the indispensable distinction of the high rank we hold in the scale (") of being) was compensation for the possibility of evil ; and the hopes of redemption from the consequences of evil, on certain conditions, was mercy.

It is granted, by those most disposed to

<sup>a</sup> It is well said by St. Augustine, " Non aliquid *debendo*, " sed omnia *promittendo*, Deus se facit *debitorem*."

treat this account as a mythological tale, that even as such it is excellent and incomparable<sup>r</sup>. But if it only stood upon the footing of other legends, that have been *invented*, as a noble writer says, to solve this great difficulty of the origin of evil for the vulgar<sup>s</sup>; if it was entirely unconnected with other facts, and not determined by any circumstances of time, and place, and persons, we might be perfectly indifferent as to its truth. But it must never be forgotten, that it is accompanied with the history of the origin of the earth, and of man; that a determinate æra is assigned to it by the order and succession of the Patriarchal families; that we find it exactly where we ought to look for it; in the oldest book extant; in the only book which gives “such a view of  
 “our world, and its inhabitants, and their  
 “affairs, as must appear to an eye observing  
 “from above, not from the earth; which  
 “gives an account of the original causes of  
 “things, the true springs of events, and de-

<sup>r</sup> *Geddes's First Preface*, p. xi.

<sup>s</sup> See *Lord Shaftesbury's Moralists*, Part I. sect. 2.

“ clares the end from the beginning<sup>t</sup>;” in the only book that pretends to give us an account at all circumstantial of the first of the human race; in the only book, which, setting out from a particular period, has any thing like a regular chronology and a regular series of events, to which we may refer, and which we may also compare with other existing records: lastly, as it more particularly concerns ourselves, in the only book to which our Saviour and his Apostles send us for a just account both of the origin of man and the origin of evil.

But besides what we learn hence of the origin of man and of evil, we are also hereby informed of the occasion of death, and instructed in the means of redemption; neither of which could ever be otherwise ascertained, than through the means of history and revelation: and yet they are so necessary towards a due comprehension of the present scene of things, and as such are so intimately connected with each other, that, without them, all that is now, all that is

<sup>t</sup> *Burgh on the Dignity of human Nature.*

past, and all that is to come, are equally inexplicable.

For that man may be removed to a state of greater perfection than the present, few will pretend to deny : the Deist has hopes of immortality, and the Socinian feels assured of it. Now a future life of perfect happiness and immortality involves in it the leading principles of redemption. Why another life, or any removal hence, if this life is perfect already ? But if this is not perfect, why is it not so ? Did God render it necessarily imperfect at first ? How then is he to be expected to grant hereafter what he at first withheld ? The whole is explained by the Mosaic account. Things *were* perfect, and may be rendered so again ; and thus, as an acute writer has observed, “ there is so  
“ necessary a connection throughout the fabric of redemption, that you must either  
“ admit or reject the whole together ; there  
“ is no accepting of one part without the  
“ other. The Scripture fully harmonizes with  
“ itself in the three particulars of *innocence*  
“ past, *depravity* present, and *righteousness*  
“ to come ; the last of these essentially in-  
“ volving

“volving both of the preceding suppositions.”

To conclude: This is the mythology we must set aside, if Moses was a fabulist. The good tidings of redemption are to be found in the very beginning of the Bible: there we are instructed not solely in the origin of evil, of which only *history*, and certainly not *metaphysics*, can ever satisfactorily inform us; but of redemption from its consequences, of which *Revelation* alone, and certainly not *metaphysics*, could ever properly assure us. It is not a system of philosophy or religion brought forth from caves or hollow trees; not derived from such deities as Jupiter and Apollo (<sup>12</sup>); not resting on fanciful conjectures, or subtle reasonings; but an open declaration of *facts*, accompanied with the most public and solemn appeals to heaven; assuming to be derived from that very God, whose supremacy and providence the Deist and the Christian equally acknowledge. Without such an explanation of matters, this world is a mystery (<sup>13</sup>), which the wicked must be left to solve and interpret as he pleases; while the good will remain without  
any



any *certain* hopes of remedy or relief. But the mystery once solved as it *is* solved by *this* account; the origin of evil once explained so as to secure man's hopes, and vindicate God's providence, every difficulty vanishes. We know our Maker; we see our Judge; and we can comprehend ourselves.



## NOTES TO SERMON III.

---

*Page 106. note (1).*

*IF there exists any independent cause of evil, how is the world ever to be set free from its tyranny?]* How very unphilosophically, to say no more, does Rousseau speak, when he says, “Mais ce monde est-il éternel ou créé? y a-t-il un principe unique des choses, y en a-t-il deux ou plusieurs, et quelle est leur nature? Je n’en fais rien, et *que m’importe?*” These are questions, he adds, “inutiles à sa conduite, et supérieures à sa Raison.” *Emile*, lib. iv. vol. iii. p. 40.

Is it of *no* importance to us to be informed whether there exists an *independent* cause of evil? Let the Manicheans push their arguments as far as they please; let them appear to some to be better advocates for the purity and perfection of God, as far as their doctrines are applied to solve only the *present* appearances of things; yet, what are we to think of futurity?

Mr. Gibbon reckons the following doctrines, which the Gnostics borrowed from Zoroaster, *sublime* ones; viz. the eternity of matter, the existence of two principles, and the mysterious hierarchy of the invisible world. *Decline and Fall*, ch. xv. He calls Augustin’s conversion, also, from Manicheism, “a progress from *Reason to Faith*.” This may have been so, perhaps, as far as Reason is to be considered as inadequate to acquaint us with the real origin of evil: but if Mr. Gibbon meant to insinuate, that it was a progress from principles consonant to Reason, to those that were not so, this we positively deny.

Bayle assuredly meant to insinuate no less, in his notes to the articles *Manichéens*, *Marcionites*, *Pauliciens*, *Origene*, *Zoroastre*, in his critical Dictionary, where he pretends, that to argue against *facts* is absurd; and

therefore, though it should be ever so *contrary to Reason*, that moral evil should have entrance into a world formed by a Being infinitely good and holy, yet we must submit to believe so, on the authority of the Old Testament, which the Manicheans, as he observes, were consistent enough to reject. The axiom, “*ab actu ad potentiam valet consequentia*,” is as clear, says he, as the proposition that two and two make four. We grant this, but are far from yielding to the consequences he would draw. Evil is in the world, we are certain: that God is good and pure, we are also certain: therefore the possibility of evil obtaining to a certain degree under the providence of a good God, is evident to *us* from the *fact*; but it by no means appears to us to follow from thence, that it would be most *reasonable* to refer the origin of evil to an independent principle of evil, because this must for ever preclude us from all expectation of its removal. And as all the arguments which M. Bayle puts into the mouths of the Manicheans (and it must be admitted that he does the utmost justice to their cause) tend to the establishment of God’s moral attributes of goodness and purity, it may surely admit of a question, whether, to argue philosophically only, that system which provides for the removal of evil in time to come, is not much more conducive to the glory of the Deity, than that, which, to account for present appearances, excludes all hopes of the melioration of things? Or which, by way of rendering the *present* system possible in the eye of Reason, would make it impossible for the providence of God to induce a change?

This is the great point to be considered, upon a view of the existing *facts*; the possibility of a *change*. The fact of the existence of evil, both moral and physical, is fully admitted by all; but every philosophical system, which refers it to a cause independent of God, necessarily involves the improbability, or rather impossibility, of any change for the better; and must derogate more from the attributes of God, than any conclusions to be drawn from the present *permission* of evil, with a prospect of its removal in whole or in part. M. Bayle pretends to exclude all *à priori* reasonings upon the subject; but it is surprising how continually he

he departs from this system. Every argument on the Manichean side may reasonably be considered as an argument *à priori*, and chiefly founded on a *petitio principii* of the possible existence of *two* principles; whereas, in adopting the plan of reasoning *à posteriori*, from the existence of facts, *we* are guilty of no *petitio principii*, in supposing the existence of a *good* principle; for that is what the Manicheans admit as well as we. His reasonings against the Origenists [art. *Origene*, note E. edit. 1738. Basle] consist entirely of *à priori* arguments, regardless of *facts*. For he would insist upon it, that a good God cannot permit evils in any degree, or upon any conditions; though this is incapable of proof *à priori*, and *à posteriori* the evidence of *facts* is against him. He says indeed, that the strongest arguments of the Manicheans are founded on the hypothesis of a few being saved, and the rest eternally damned: but the existence of two independent principles implies the necessary existence of evils, both natural and moral, to eternity, by the acknowledgment of M. Bayle himself, (see his *Eclaircissement* at the end of his Dictionary, p. 630.) and this in direct opposition to a perfectly good and pure principle.

Nothing less than an *eternal independent* principle of evil would answer the ends of the Manicheans, as Bayle argues, art. *Zoroastre*, note F. ii. p. 559; because, “quod est causa causæ est causa causati;” therefore, says he, if *Arimanius* was a *creature*, then God must be the cause of evil, by creating *Arimanius*, the evil principle. We shall not stop to argue this point with M. Bayle; those who think the question may be decided metaphysically, may consult the *Summa* of *St. Thomas*, particularly Part I. Quæst. xlix. and the 2d article of the same question; where he contends, that there can be no first principle of evil, as there is a first principle of good; because all evil being *defect*, presupposes good as its subject. Therefore evil can never prevail over good, because, “destructo omni bono, “(quod requiritur ad integritatem mali) subtrahitur “ipsum malum cujus subjectum est bonum.” And perhaps this is as good a *metaphysical* argument against two independent principles as any. *St. Augustin* argues much in the same way, *De Civit. Dei*, xi. 9. xii.

6. 7. and our learned Barrow seems disposed to adopt his reasonings, vol. ii. Sermon. 12. But to return.

We would contend then against the Manicheans, and upon M. Bayle's own plan of argument, that all *à posteriori* reasoning from *faits* would lead us to acquiesce in the scriptural account of things, in preference to any philosophical system extant, though they should all proceed upon the principle of not referring the origin of evil to a good cause. We have already noticed, in the Discourse itself, the tendency of the two other systems; namely, that of a scale of beings, and the essential malignity of matter, to preclude all hope of any future extermination of evil; and therefore these also must be considered, however well designed, as reflecting on the Deity.

Many have been disposed to allow all these several systems the merit of endeavouring to provide for the honour of God, and to exculpate him, as a Being of purity and perfection, from being the cause of evil. But the Manichean scheme, of all others, seems the least entitled to such indulgence, as precluding all interference of the good principle, except by *compromise* and *concession*, (which was Bayle's amendment of the hypothesis,) and which must especially derogate from the honour of God.

The Platonists, (as represented by Plutarch, who was for espousing their doctrine in preference to that of Heraclitus, in his *Ψυχογόνια*, cited by Cudworth, b. iv. 6.) though they contended for the eternity of matter, and its essential depravity, yet referred the *order* of the world to the *change* wrought on matter by God; *Οὐ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἡ γένεσις, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆ μὴ καλῶς μηδ' ἱκανῶς ἔχοντος*. One such change does not absolutely preclude a second; so that this error leaves an opening for improvement at least, and that through the power and will of God. Indeed the true Platonic idea seems to have been, that evil, and that chiefly physical evil, is only *necessary* in regard to the things of this lower world; [see *Max. Tyrius, Dissert. xxv.*] and that Mind, or God, would in the end get the better of this necessity. See *Wise against Atheism*, vol. i. p. 136. and *Cudworth*, as before.

The Gnostics, indeed, when they came to blend the  
phi-

philosophical notion of two principles with Christianity; generally acknowledged Christ to be sent to overcome the evil principle: [see *Mosheim*:] but M. Bayle will not allow *such* Manicheism to be reasonable; he insists upon it, that the evil principle must be independent, or God the sole cause of evil, and that Reason cannot determine otherwise.

The system of a scale of beings has for its supporters, as is well known, the celebrated Archbp. King, and his learned commentator. Pope has illustrated it in verse, heedless, as it has been supposed, of the bad tendency of the principles with which he was supplied by Bolingbroke. The objection to this system seems to be, that it makes evil, both moral and physical, *so* necessary, as to lessen, if not destroy entirely, the probability of a change. For, as an able writer has well remarked, to consider man *in his depraved state*, as occupying his proper rank in the scale of beings, is not only contradictory to the Scriptures, which particularly speak both of a preceding and a future different state of man; but tends to preclude all hope of change, which could not happen upon such principles, without the dissolution of that very chain of being, and consequently without injury to the creation. [See *New Theory of Redemption*, book ii. ch. 8.] For as Pope himself argues,

“ ——— on superior powers

“ Were we to press, inferior might on ours :

“ Or in the *full* creation leave a *void*,

“ Where, *one* step broken, the *great scale's* destroy'd.

“ From nature's chain whatever link you strike,

“ Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.”

Epist. I. 243.

This is certainly very hazardous doctrine, when we are taught besides to believe, that

“ All subsists by elemental strife,

“ And passions are the elements of life.

“ The general order; since the *whole* began,

“ Is *kept* in nature, and is *kept* in man.” Ib. 169, &c.

M. Bayle objects also, as is well known, to the system which refers the origin of evil to the abuse of free will: but of this we shall have more to say elsewhere. I shall conclude the present note by observing, that

this circumstance of a future *change*, and *redemption from evil*, though reasonably to be expected upon the supposition of a *good* principle, yet must serve to evince the positive necessity of a divine Revelation, while Infidelity and Atheism still shelter themselves behind the old argument, as it is expressed by one of the most modern writers of that description; “ Si, malgré sa bonté toute puissante, Dieu n’a, ni pu, ni voulu, rendre ses créatures chéries complètement heureuses en ce monde, quelle raison a-t-on de croire qu’il le pourra, ou le voudra dans un autre ? ” *Système de la Nature*, ch. vii. Part II.

We answer, that God has effectually done away this difficulty, in the Revelation he has been pleased to make of his most holy will and purposes, from the first creation of man.

It is the Scripture only that can secure us also from the revival of the ancient error of the eternity of matter, and its essential imperfection; for Rousseau fully acknowledges, in his *Letter to the Archbishop of Paris*, that if it was not for the Scriptures, he should think this the most reasonable account to be given of things; and he even doubts whether the Scriptures *do* contradict it; for he says it depends entirely on the word ברא, which may be mis-translated. But we have little to do with the word ברא in determining the question concerning the *origin of evil*, if the Scriptures are acknowledged to be of any authority; for they not only discover to us the very means whereby evil was introduced into this world, but expressly assure us, that, previous to the fall of man, every thing upon the earth, or in the system, was in its nature GOOD. See Gen. i. 10. 12. 18. 21. 25. 31.

The author of the *Système de la Nature* says, “ tout le monde convient que la matiere ne peut s’anéantir totalement, ou cesser d’exister.” If so, the philosophical notion of the depravity and essential imperfection of matter strikes directly at the doctrine of the resurrection of the body: but, as Origen says, the body has not naturally any malignity in it. Φύσις δὲ σώματος οὐ μισρά· εἰ γὰρ ἡ φύσις [σώματος] μισρότης ἐστὶ, τὸ γεννητικὸν τῆς μισρότητος ἔχει τὴν κακίαν. *Contr. Cels.* lib. iii. p. 136. edit. Cantab. Many objectors have conceived, that the  
resur-



resurrection of the body is *denied* by the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 50. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." They are well answered by Mr. Granville Sharp, in his *Treatise on the Law of Nature in Man*, p. 400. Though, as the objection is an old one, a sufficient explanation is to be found in almost every commentary upon the passage; and indeed, as Mr. Sharp observes, the Apostle himself explains his meaning in the very next words. It is not the substance, but the *corruptibility* of the body, that is to be done away.

Page 110. note (2).

*We have intimation of an opposing principle, but of no independent one.*] Mr. Paine, in his *Age of Reason*, pretends that the Scriptures represent Satan as great, if not greater than the Almighty; as defeating by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation, *all the power and wisdom of the Almighty!* as having compelled the Almighty to the direct necessity either of surrendering the whole of the creation to the government and sovereignty of Satan, or of capitulating for its redemption by coming down upon earth, and exhibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a man: as making the transgressor triumph, and the Almighty fall!

Diderot, in his *Système de la Nature*, resembles the opposition between Jehovah and Satan to the struggles between the good and evil principles of the several heathen nations: "à cause de tant d'effets opposés qu'on vit dans la nature, on admit pendant long-temps plusieurs dieux. Telle est sur-tout l'origine du dogme si ancien et si universel des deux principes. Voilà la source des combats que toute l'antiquité suppose entre des dieux bons et méchants, entre Osiris et Typhon, Oromasde et Arimane, Jupiter et les Titans, Jehovah et Satan." M. Holland, in his excellent *Reflexions Philosophiques* on the above work, is contented to observe, "Pour ce qui est des combats que l'auteur suppose avoir été livrés entre Jehovah et Satan, il ne peut les avoir trouvés que dans Milton." In what light Satan appears as the opponent of the Deity in the writings of Milton, we need not say; it must be well known, that in the two immortal Poems of that great writer,

writer, the whole object is to prove, that the “transgressor” could *not* “triumph,” nor “the Almighty fall.” So that if the combat invented by the Poet, and engrafted on the plain and simple narrative of Moses, may be held to instruct us in Scripture truths, we may expressly refer to it as an admirable reply to the impious suggestions of the author of the *Age of Reason*; while it being a fact, that no relation of any combat is to be found in the Scriptures between Jehovah and Satan, Diderot’s comparison falls at once to the ground.

It is not to be denied, however, that the doctrine of two principles, and the Mosaic relation of the fall of man, and introduction of evil into the world, have been often confounded, though nothing can in reality be more contrary; so much so indeed, that the learned author of the Divine Legation of Moses would insist upon it, that the history of Satan, in the book of Job, was expressly designed to guard the Jews against the error of two principles, which they had been in danger of imbibing, during their captivity in Babylon. [Book vi. §. 2.] Though the learned author might be mistaken as to the true history of the book of Job, he had assuredly discernment enough to be entirely correct in his judgment of the character of Satan, and of his *subjection* to the Supreme Being, as they are represented in Scripture; nor can he be wrong in supposing, that the doctrine of two independent principles is directly opposed in the Scriptures, if not by the character of Satan in the book of Job, yet by the evident allusion to the Magian superstition, and the vindication of God’s supremacy, in the Prophecy of Isaiah, xlv. 6, 7. “I form the *light*, and create *darkness*; I make *peace*, and create *evil*. There is no God besides me;” which the learned author particularly refers to. “And yet,” says he, “we have heads weighty enough to get to the bottom of this matter;” that is, as he expresses himself, who, *contrary to the Scriptures*, would believe, that the Jews obtained their notion of Satan from the Chaldeans. Now this is a mistake the world is still in danger of being led into. In *Mr. Lindsey’s Conversations on the Divine Government*, published so lately as 1802, the Jewish notions of an *evil* being are expressly supposed to have been derived from the Chaldeans; “who pro-

“probably might have pointed out to them,” says he, “or they might themselves imagine, that the serpent, who is represented as acting such a principal part in their own sacred history, was the evil principle of the Chaldeans.” Mr. Lindsey’s object is to prove, that there is *no* evil Being whatsoever, and that the Jews could derive no such idea from their own books. We may reasonably ask, why should they be more easily led to think the serpent might be the evil principle of the Chaldeans, than the *Satan* of Jews and Christians? “With whose history,” says Warburton, “it is evident they were acquainted in their captivity; and nothing could better secure them *from* the dangerous error of the *two principles*, which was part of the national religion of the country, into which they were led captive.” So entirely do Bishop Warburton and Mr. Lindsey differ upon *this* subject. But in regard to the true character of the tempter and seducer of mankind, in the Mosaic history, I have endeavoured in the Discourse itself to state it as concisely as I could; and I am sure the account I have given is consonant to the words of Scripture; for there we undoubtedly read of “an *opposing principle, but of no independent one.*”

This should never be lost sight of, because all our hopes must rest on the possibility of a redemption and deliverance from the evils of this world. Of the possibility of an *opposition* to the will of God we have daily experience, in the conduct of the hardened sinner; and therefore it is of the utmost importance to be able to look back to the first beginning of moral evil; that is, to the account given us in the Scripture of the *first* Being,

“Who durst defy th’ Omnipotent.” —

*Paradise Lost*, b. i. 49.

where, so far from finding any *independent principle*, any *triumphant transgressor*, the truth certainly is, as I have represented it, that, “as soon as we hear of him in the Bible, we read of his dependence on the Supreme; as soon as we read of him as an enemy to our nature, we have intimation of God’s protection against him.” Gen. iii. 14, 15. Lord Bolingbroke pretends, indeed, that the supposition of an *inferior dependant Being, who is assumed to be the author of all evil,*

is more absurd than the doctrine of *two independent principles*. See him admirably answered by Leland, in his *View of Deistical Writers*, Letter xxx. note, p. 149. vol. ii. 5th edit.

Page 111. note (3.)

*For how could the relation of such events be kept free from the marvellous ?]*

“ For man to tell how human life began

“ Is hard ; for who himself beginning knew ?

*Paradise Lost*, b. viii. 250.

“ The account is what we should call, in reference to our experience, *miraculous* ; but was it possible it should be otherwise ? I believe the greatest Infidel will not deny, that it is at least as plausible an opinion, that the world had a beginning, as that it had not. If it had, can it be imagined by any man in his senses, that that particular quality should be an objection to the narrative, which he knows it must have ? Must not the first production of things, the original formation of animals and vegetables, require exertions of power, which in preservation and propagation can never be exemplified ?” *Campbell on Miracles*, Part II. §. 7. See also §. 6. p. 213.

That an extraordinary mode of production was indispensably necessary, seems to be a fair conclusion, from the famous problem concerning the Hen and the Egg. *Macrobius*, lib. vii. The eternity of the world is contradicted by that very problem. See *Nichols's Conferences*, vol. i. p. 18. and consult *Macrobius* for the arguments on the subject. It is not a little remarkable, that Moses, in his *Cosmogony*, has expressly settled the question, in the case of herbs and trees. Gen. i. 12.

Page 112. note (4).

*It is well known in what terms a celebrated translator has spoken of the author of the Pentateuch.]* See Notes (6) and (12), Sermon II. At the end of Dr. Geddes's critical remarks on the Pentateuch, we have his creed as to the divine inspiration of Moses, in Latin verses,  
(*faulty*)

(*faulty* ones, see *Brit. Crit.* vol. xix. p. 5.) thus englished by himself.

“ You ask me serious, whether I believe  
 “ That Moses was inspir’d? My friend, receive  
 “ This serious answer: Yes, he was inspir’d  
 “ With that *same flame* which Numa’s bosom fir’d.  
 “ Numa, Lycurgus, every other sage  
 “ Who legislated for a barbarous age,  
 “ All drank from wisdom’s fount, or wisdom’s rill;  
 “ Large draughts they drew—but Moses larger still.  
 “ Yet think not all the draughts that Moses drew  
 “ Were limpid draughts; sometimes a slimy hue  
 “ Beting’d the waters. Since the world began  
 “ One man drew purely;—Jesus was that man!  
 “ Jesus alone, full of the godhead, brought  
 “ A code of laws divine, that lacketh nought.  
 “ Then dumb let other legislators be,  
 “ And Jesus only legislate for ME.”

See *Good’s Life of Dr. Geddes.*

Instead of other legislators being dumb, it is certainly remarkable, that Jesus should have said of the Jewish legislator and his successors, “ If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” Such was the opinion of our Lord himself, as to the authority of Moses and the other sacred writers of the Old Testament. But to answer Dr. Geddes in his own way; “ If Moses was a mere human legislator,” says a very amiable modern writer, “ how comes it that his institutions are still obeyed? He flourished many ages before *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, or *Numa*, who were esteemed the wisest of mankind, in the ages in which they respectively lived; and *they* travelled to remote regions, to form a body of laws that should combine every possible advantage, which collective wisdom could bestow. These laws were solemnly imposed, and received with reverence; and the nations, for whom they were designed grew powerful and renowned, under the influence of those institutions. Yet, of these nations, history is now the only repository. No people, no body of men, not even a few exiles are influenced by what a goddess whispered to Numa, in ‘ the Egerian Grot,’ or by what Lycurgus,

“ from

“from his own perpetual exile, bound his countrymen  
 “to obey: while the Jews have continued a distinct,  
 “unmixed people, and, under every disadvantage, pre-  
 “served their law and their customs.” See *Mrs. West’s*  
*Letters to her Son*. How exactly Dr. Geddes agreed  
 with Lord Bolingbroke in his opinion of the Bible,  
 see *Earle’s Remarks*, p. 66. For an answer to Lord Bo-  
 lingbroke, see *Leland’s View of Deistical Writers*, Let-  
 ters xxviii. xxix. xxx. vol. ii. 5th edit.

Page 112. note (5).

*I allude to an extraordinary memorial presented to a  
 very conspicuous member of the Christian church in the  
 kingdom of Prussia.]* This memorial was addressed by  
 certain Jews to M. Teller, *Conseiller du Consistoire su-  
 périeur, et Prévôt à Berlin*, about six or seven years ago.  
 In it they express a desire to be admitted into society,  
 upon an equal footing with Christians, on professing  
 their belief of five general propositions of moral theo-  
 logy, or *pure Deism*, which they submit to his con-  
 sideration. They acknowledge themselves to be quite  
 prepared to renounce their faith in the divine origin of  
 their Law, and express a hope and expectation, that  
 Christians will be induced to accede to such a common  
 form of belief, to the exclusion of all particular doc-  
 trines. The Jews were admirably answered by M. de  
 Luc; and a further correspondence took place between  
 him and M. Teller on the subject; in which the authen-  
 ticity and literal sense of the three first chapters of Ge-  
 nesis are ably vindicated, and the indispensable impor-  
 tance of the history they contain, evinced by many  
 strong arguments.

The Jews, in their memorial, having assigned, as a  
 cause for their indifference in regard to the truth of  
 the Mosaic records, the *recent advancement of human  
 knowledge*, M. de Luc applies himself to examine into  
 the real state of knowledge, as it relates to the *history  
 of man*; and with great judgment and force of reason-  
 ing shews, that this is the very branch of science least  
 capable of improvement, and in which, if Revelation is  
 once abandoned, the least certainty is to be expected.  
 Having shewn that some sciences admit of conclusive  
 reasoning, (such as Geometry, Astronomy, &c.) while  
 others

others do not, he thus proceeds to state the need of Revelation, from the manifest uncertainty that must ensue from every man's having to form a religion for himself. "Il y a plus; on voit par l'expérience, que moins l'entendement a de moyens sûrs et précis pour former quelque jugement sur un objet, plus chaque homme se croit en droit d'en décider: dans les sciences fondées sur des lumières qui peuvent être acquises avec certitude, on voit rarement ceux qui n'en ont pas fait leur étude, se mêler d'en raisonner. Mais quant à la *Religion*, vers laquelle tend tout le sujet que je traite ici, en vue de votre mémoire; parce qu'elle doit servir de base à la *morale*, et par celle-ci à l'*ordre social*; dès qu'on n'admettra pas une *révélation* immédiate de l'Etre suprême, faite à certaines époques pour tous les hommes; et qu'ainsi on ne voudra de *Religion*, qu'autant que la *Raison* seule pourra y conduire, chacun se fera une *Religion* pour soi, s'il s'en fait une; car la *prétention à la Raison* est, et ne peut qu'être, égale chez tous les hommes; et vu la sublimité de l'objet, vers lequel aucune connoissance humaine ne peut servir d'échelon, l'ignorant en parlera même avec plus d'assurance que l'homme qui s'en fera occupé le plus profondement." He insists upon it, that no abstract propositions can be a sufficient basis of morality, and refers to the writings of M. Fichte, Professor of Philosophy at Jéna, to shew how little agreement is even now to be expected in regard to the decisions of pure Reason. M. Fichte, he observes, had by anticipation, as it were, expressly contradicted the very first of their five propositions. "Il y a un Dieu—être incréé—unique—infini—le Créateur—Conservateur et Juge de l'univers." But according to M. Fichte, the idea of a creation distinct from the Creator is an absurdity. "Je voudrais, qu'il eût plu à mes adversaires de me donner sur ce sujet, pour la première fois, un mot intelligible, qui me fit entendre ce qu'ils veulent exprimer en disant, Dieu a créé le monde, et comment on peut se faire une idée d'une telle création. Tant qu'ils n'auront pas donné ce mot, j'aurai droit de penser qu'il faut avoir perdu l'esprit pour croire à un Dieu comme ils y croient, et que mon *Athéisme* ne consiste qu'en ce que je voudrais  
"garder

“garder mon esprit.” I have ventured to transcribe this passage from M. Fichte’s Appeal to the public, as I find it in M. de Luc’s *Lettre aux Juifs*, because it certainly serves to prove M. de Luc’s point, viz. that no advances, that have been recently made in human knowledge, may encourage us to expect any greater agreement among men, in regard to any abstract propositions; and that nothing less than a divine revelation can ever be expected to produce a general acknowledgment of the very first principle of Religion, namely, that there exists a Creator of the universe, a Creator who is distinct from the visible creation. “J’ai dit,” says M. Fichte, as I find him cited in another place, “que l’idée de Dieu, comme substance à part, étoit une idée impossible et contradictoire.” According then to M. Fichte, both Jews and Christians have lost their wits, who pretend to believe the creation of the universe, as generally received. And we have positive proof, to use M. de Luc’s own words, “que les idées d’un Créateur et d’un monde créé peuvent être rejetées par les hommes, quand elles ne leur sont présentées que comme des idées de la Raison.”

But M. de Luc proves further, that every one of the Jews’ five propositions is contradicted by the system of M. Fichte. “Jugez par là, Messieurs,” M. de Luc concludes, “quels peuvent être les écarts de l’esprit humain, quant aux dogmes; tandis que vous considérez ceux que vous proposez dans votre mémoire, comme étant appuyés sur le commun consentement de tous les hommes, d’après les lumières naturelles!” I shall have occasion to notice M. de Luc’s correspondence with M. Teller hereafter.

Page 113. note (6.)

*The strict connection between the Old and the New Testaments—our Lord himself has taught us to acknowledge and maintain.*] Tertullian, in his book *adversus Judæos*, has ably pointed out the connection between the two Testaments. See Houtteville’s *Critical and Historical Discourse*. See also *Laetantius*, lib. iv. St. Cyril of Jerusalem gives this definition of Christian faith: “Ἡ πίστις—πᾶσαν τὴν ἐν τῇ παλαιᾷ καὶ καινῇ [διαθήκῃ] subintell. τῆς εὐσεβείας γινώσκειν ἐγκεκολπισαί. *Cateches. V.* And in his  
VIIth



*VIIIth Lecture* he deprecates every separation of the two Testaments: Οὐ γὰρ ἀνεξόμεθα τῶν αἰρετικῶν τῶν τὴν παλαιὰν τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης ἀποχίζοντων· ἀλλὰ τῷ Χριστῷ πεισθησόμεθα, τῷ λέγοντι περὶ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, (the temple of the Jews,) ἐκ ἧδεῖς ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρὸς μου δεῖ με εἶναι; acknowledging, as Cyril remarks, that the temple of Jerusalem was his Father's house. The same Father, in his *Xth Lecture*, speaks of John the Baptist, as, τρόπον τινὰ συνάπτων ἀμφοτέρας ἐν αὐτῷ τὰς διαθήκας, παλαιὰν καὶ καίνην. "Quodammodo conglutinans in seipso ambo Testamenta," as Grodecius renders it. See also *Disc. xvi.*

What was heretical in the days of Cyril is so now. The Old and New Testaments are *inseparable*; and no true Christian can think himself authorized to "put afunder" what God has by so many notices "joined" and connected. "Ἀληθῶς μὲν γὰρ," as Origen says, (*contr. Cels. lib. ii.*) Χριστιανοῖς ἡ εἰσαγωγή ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν Μωϋσέως, καὶ τῶν προφητικῶν γραμμάτων." The separation indeed is never proposed, but with some design of getting rid of the peculiar doctrines of our most holy religion. The Deist is for the separation, because, connected, the evidence of a divine interposition is too strong to be resisted: the great chain of prophecies and events must be broken, or *his* cause is lost: the hand of God must be acknowledged. The Socinian is for the separation, because atonement and redemption by *blood* are too prominently shadowed forth, in the typical sacrifices of the Jewish law, to be disputed or resisted. For, as an elegant writer has lately observed of the Old Testament, "If this remains as a type, then the Christian doctrine of atonement must be received as the fulfilment; and therefore," says she, "the Socinians impugn its authority." See *West's Letters to her Son*.

But besides the Jewish sacrifices, the fall of man so evidently implies the need of redemption, that the Socinian is equally interested in getting rid of this; which Dr. Priestley plainly discovers, in his *Letter to a Philosophical Unbeliever*, Part II. Pref. p. xiii. where, without any attempt to argue the point, he gives us merely his own opinion of the subject. "I believe the sacred writers," says he, "to be men of probity; but nevertheless men, and consequently fallible, and

“liable to *mistake* with respect to things, to which they had not given much attention, or concerning which they had not the means of exact information; which *I take to be the case*, with respect to the account which Moses has given of the *creation and fall of man*.” The Jews are guilty of a prejudiced separation of the two Covenants, when they unreasonably deny that their Law is typical. See *Leslie’s Method with the Jews*, p. 78. fol. edit.

There is also a set of *Geological* Deists, who openly assert the independence of the two Covenants; having, *as they think*, good ground to dispute the Mosaic account of the creation, of the deluge, &c. In order to render their opinions *palatable*, they assure the world, that Christianity has nothing to do with those chapters of the book of Genesis, in which these facts are recorded. See Discourses V. and VI.

While such motives exist then for inducing men to consider the two Testaments as separable, it may be well to repeat the admirable caution of Bishop Warburton. “I reply then,” says he, “that it will admit of no dispute, but that if they may have liberty of inventing two *chimeras*, and of calling one *Judaism*, and the other *Christianity*, they will have a very easy victory over both.” This is an old trick, and has often been tried with success: but sure the Deist is not to obtrude his own *inventions* for those religions he endeavours to overthrow. Much less is he to *beg the question* of their falsity; as the laying it down that the *Jewish* and *Christian* are two independent religions certainly is; because *Christianity* claims its titles of divinity from and under *Judaism*. If therefore *Deists will not*, yet *Christians must* of necessity take their religion as they find it: and if they will remove infidel objections to either religion, they must reason on the principle of *dependency*; and while they do so, their reasonings will not only be just and logical, but every solution, on such a principle, will, besides its determination on the particular point in question, be a new proof of the divinity of both in general; because such a relation, connection, and dependency between two religions of so distant periods, could not possibly come about but by Divine provision. For a Deist therefore to bid us remove his

“ob-

“ objections on the principle of independency, is to bid  
 “ us prove our religion *true* on a principle, that implies  
 “ its *falsehood* : the *New Testament* giving us no other  
 “ idea of *Christianity* than as of a religion dependent on,  
 “ connected with, and the completion of *Judaism*.”  
*Divine Legation of Moses*, book v. §. 5.

Page 119. note (7).

Nor yet can it ever point out to him what will be efficacious to redeem him from sin and death.] Porphyry, that great enemy to Christianity, confessed that no system of philosophy had supplied him with a method of delivering men's souls. *Aug. de Civ. Dei*, lib. x. c. 32. In this then most especially the utility of Revelation consists, and upon this ground we may reasonably prove the truth and divinity of the holy Scriptures by Origen's test : τὸ γὰρ ἐν τῶν δύο δεῖ σε παραδέξασθαι ἐπὶ τούτων τῶν γραφῶν ἢ ὅτι ἐκ εἰσὶ θεόπνευστοι, ἐπεὶ ἐκ εἰσὶ ὠφέλιμοι, ὡς ὑπολαμβάνει ὁ ἄπιστος, ἢ ὡς πιστὸς παραδέξασθαι, ὅτι ἐπεὶ εἰσιν ὠφέλιμοι θεόπνευστοί εἰσιν. *Philocalia*, c. xii. Those who will not acknowledge redemption to be necessary, are not qualified to judge of the utility of Christianity.

Page 120. note (8).

But to assert, that in the mere morality of the Gospel consists the whole of Christianity, must be either a gross misconception, or a most perverse misrepresentation of matters.]

All, says Rousseau, (*Letters from the Mountains*, Letter III.) that we ought to believe inspired, is what relates to our duty ; for to what purpose should God give the rest by inspiration ? I answer ; our duty is founded, in the Gospel of Christ, on our hopes. God has been pleased to make his service perfect freedom. We are no longer servants under the Gospel, we are heirs of the promises ; joint-heirs with Christ in the kingdom of heaven. To know our duty from inspiration is a great security ; but to know our prospects of forgiveness, and the promises of pardon through Christ, from inspiration, is a foundation for the most glorious hopes and most comfortable encouragements. God might have given us no more than rules of practice ; but the doctrinal words of comfort are of the most intrinsic value. Those who are disposed to

regard *duty* before *doctrine*, would do well to consult an admirable note to Bishop Burgess's Sermon on the Divinity of Christ; where he shews, that "to object that "practical duties are *more* important than religious "opinions, is foreign to the subject, and implies the "denial of what is not denied. It is fruitless to enquire which of two duties be the more acceptable, "where both are indispensable; and dangerous to form "comparisons of two indispensable duties, where the "preference of one tends to the depreciation of the "other."

*Page 121. note (9).*

*If we will not be informed of these matters historically—we must be contented to be ignorant.]* The learned Archbishop King says indeed, that, though there had been no history of the fall of man, we should have had a proper answer to make to the infidel; since though the misery and corruption of mankind is really lamentable, yet it is not so great, but that it may be reconciled with the good Providence of God. This may be so; but it is much better not to have to rely on human Reason to determine such a point for the world in general, for Reason will always find something to oppose to Reason: and however clear the answer might appear to the Archbishop, he must have known, from the disposition of Bayle, whom he was answering, that nothing short of an historical account of matters could satisfy the scruples of a Manichean.

*Page 123. note (10).*

*What intimation he gave him of his condition and future destiny; or whether any such intimation was ever given?* This last is in fact the great enquiry. Mr. Hume's arguments to prove that we cannot presume ever to reason or even to enquire concerning what has been, or may be; that is, (to use his own words) "in regard to "the origin of worlds, and the situation of nature, "from and to eternity;" do not at all preclude us from the enquiry, whether a Revelation has been made. A Revelation accompanied with such circumstances as contribute to clear up the moral doubts that must otherwise necessarily perplex us in our passage through  
life,

life, and supported and confirmed by proofs affecting the senses, or capable of being judged of and appreciated by Reason, must needs become one of those events, not only subject to, but imperiously demanding our notice and examination. Mr. H. would certainly not preclude enquiry and examination in the case of the Pagan mythologies; the mere attempt to impose them on the world, renders them fit subjects of enquiry. The question is not, as Mr. Hume would insinuate, how does God act, or will God act, separate from the visible works of his hands; but whether God has, or has not, operated in an extraordinary manner to enlighten and instruct the world. We still appeal to *facts*, not to *metaphysics*.

Page 124. note (11).

*If not as an instrument of happiness universally, yet as the indispensable distinction of the high rank we hold in the scale of being.]* Though the scale of being may be liable to objections, when considered as the cause and occasion of the present existence of evil; (see Note 1.) yet that a scale of being prevails we cannot question. Bayle, who contends that the doctrine of free-will is derogatory to the honour of God, ventures to affirm, "that Adam and Eve would have looked upon God's restraint to keep them from falling, as a new favour, as great as the precedent one of free-will." Note M. art. *Pauliciens*. How differently does Rousseau judge of the gift of free-will! "Murmurer de ce que Dieu ne l'empêchepas de faire le mal, c'est murmurer de ce qu'il l'a fit d'une nature excellente, de ce qu'il mit à ses actions la moralité qui les ennoblit, de ce qu'il lui donna droit à la vertu." *Emile* tom. iii. 51. And in another place he expresses himself much more strongly, where he observes, that, without the chance of moral evil, man would be *no better* than the angels; "et sans doute," he adds, "l'homme vertueux sera plus qu'eux." Liv. iv. And certainly he is right as far as regards the *evil* angels. See 1 Cor. vi. 3. The *good* angels Mr. Bayle supposes not to be free, by way of perplexing those who assert free-will to be by its abuse the cause of evil; but this is to suppose free-will *must* be abused: which is far from being the case. See note 90. p. 241. *King's Ori-*

*gin of Evil*, 4to edit. and note 93. p. 247. Indeed the true object of man's free-will seems to be, that he should be capable of *praise, reward, and approbation* in the presence of God; and which the Protoplasts might have merited by *preserving their innocence*; for they would have resembled Milton's "inviolable saints," *Par. Lost*, b. vi. whose

"Cubic phalanx firm, advanc'd entire,  
 "Invulnerable, impenetrably arm'd;  
 "Such high advantages their *innocence*  
 "Gave them above their foes, *not to have sin'd,*  
 "Not to have disobey'd."

And it is certainly reasonable what Justin Martyr says of the *possibility* of moral evil; εἰ γὰρ ἂν ἦν ἐπαινετὸν ἐδὲν εἰ ἐκ ἧν ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα (καλίαν καὶ ἀρετήν) τρέπεσθαι, καὶ δύναμιν εἶχε. *Pro Christianis Apol.* 1. See also his *2d Apol.* p. 63. edit. Sylburg.

The atheistical Author of the *Système de la Nature* says, the system of the free-will of man seems only invented to put it in man's power to offend God, and to vindicate the latter from all blame on account of the evil committed by man, through the abuse of the fatal gift (*la liberté funeste*) he had bestowed on him. But the circumstance of the Tree of Life in the Mosaic account plainly proves, that man's offence, and the evil consequences thereof, were not more in the contemplation of the supreme Legislator, when he gave the law, than his *strict obedience* and the *blessings* flowing therefrom, and which *might* have been as well the *fruits* of his *liberty*. M. Holland's excellent remark upon this objection of the *Système de la Nature* is as follows; "Un bien dont on peut abuser, mais dont *le bon usage* mene infailliblement au bonheur, n'est point un présent *funeste*, et ne le devient que par notre propre faute. P. 65. P. II. See also *Clarke on the Attributes*, p. 123; where he maintains, that, if liberty is not a perfection in man, though liable to abuse, it would follow, that a stone must needs be more perfect than a man, insomuch as it wants liberty, reason, and knowledge, through which alone a man does certainly become capable of misery.

But it is never sufficiently considered by those who object to the abuse of free-will, as being a sufficient solution of the origin of evil, that, according to the Scriptures,

tures, it was not abused, but *in express contradiction to God's command*; and certainly St. Thomas argues reasonably, “Si minister faciat aliquid *contra mandatum domini*, hoc non reducitur in dominum sicut in causam. Et similiter peccatum, quod liberum arbitrium committit contra præceptum Dei, non reducitur in Deum sicut in causam.” *Summa*, Part. II. Quæst. lxxix. Art. 1. Justin Martyr says that Plato borrowed of Moses the following remark, in regard to the origin of moral evil; that man's own choice renders *him* the cause of evil, but God is faultless; Αἰτία Ἐλομένη, Θεὸς δ' ἀναίτιος. *Apol. ad Ant. P.* p. 63. and the passage of Moses referred to certainly bears him out; Ἰδὲ πρὸ προσώπου σε τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ κακόν· ἐκλέξας τὰ ἀγαθόν. What Justin Martyr further says in the same place on the subject of free-will is also much to the purpose. See besides the answer to the VIIIth Question *ad Orthodoxos*, attributed to Justin Martyr; a spurious work probably, but very ingenious. Consult also *Bishop Stillingfleet's Origines Sacr.* B. iii. chap. 3. §. vi.

“The permission of evil,” says Dr. Price, in his admirable remarks on Dr. Priestley's strange scheme of Fatalism and Materialism, “is to be accounted for chiefly, by the impossibility of producing the greatest good, without giving *active powers*, and allowing scope for exercising them.” Add, that without the freedom of the human will, God could have been no moral governor, or have displayed any of the perfections of justice, mercy, and the like: see *Clarke's Sermons*, vol. v. p. 91.

Page 128. note (12).

*Not derived from such deities as Jupiter and Apollo.]* Τί ἔν πρὸς ταῦτα ἀπακρίναιτο ὁ Ζεὺς, ἢ ὁ Ἀπόλλων, ἢ τις ἄλλος μαντικὸς Θεός; says Maximus Tyrius in regard to the very question of the origin of evil. Ἀκέσωμεν, he goes on, τῶν προφήτε λέγοντες; (it is Jupiter that addresses the Gods;)

ὦ πάποι, οἷον δὴ νῦν θεὸς βροτοὶ αἰτιόωνται.

Ἐξ ἡμέων γὰρ φασὶ κακ' ἔμμεναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ

Σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὑπὲρ μέτρον ἄλγε' ἔχουσι.

Hom. Od. d. 33.

Max. Tyr. *Dissertat.* xxv.

Page 128. note (13.)

*Without such an explanation of matters, this world is a mystery &c.]* “The world, instead of being, as the  
“vanity of some men has taught them to assert, a la-  
“byrinth of which they hold the clue, is in reality full  
“of enigmas, which no penetration of man has hitherto  
“been able to solve.” *Godwin*. We grant this to Mr.  
*Godwin*. It is *God* holds the clue, and man can know  
no more, in regard to many most important points,  
than what *God* is pleased to reveal to him. It would  
be well if *Deists* and *Free-thinkers* would attend to  
this.



---

## S E R M O N IV.

---

ECCLESIASTICUS XV. 12.

*Say not thou, God hath caused me to err ; for he hath no need of the sinful man.*

IN my last Discourse I endeavoured to shew, that however highly we may be disposed to estimate the faculty of human Reason, and whatever advantages may have accrued of late, from the progress and advancement of human knowledge, towards the due exercise and application of its powers ; and lastly, whatever importance we may be inclined to allow to metaphysical enquiries, where the subject is suitable, and certainly attainable ; there are some questions connected with theology, and particularly those that relate to the moral government of the world, which are wholly incapable of being solved by speculative reasoning. Such are indisputably those that regard the origin of *man*, and the origin

gin of *evil*. And therefore, that if the Scripture account of these two most important and interesting events is fabulous, so far from our deriving any satisfaction from the detection of such an imposture, the world could only become, from such a circumstance, a greater mystery to us than ever.

The particulars of the account may to superficial enquirers appear allegorical (<sup>1</sup>), because the present appearances of things might be described under such figures. But we ought to remember, that, in looking for the origin of evil in the Bible, as a revelation from God, of the first beginning of things, it is not a *description* of present appearances, but an *explanation*, we are in search of. We do not want to know, in the way of *description*, that man is liable to temptations; but, in the way of *explanation*, why there was a tempter:—that the laws of God have been universally infringed; but what law was first broken, and how man became capable of transgressing any law of God?—that death is an event common to all; but how it became so? These are facts and events, certainly not capable of being *explained* by allegory; and a figurative representation

presentation of such matters is altogether useless.

Yet they must appear, when duly considered, to be of such awful importance to us, that if man could be supposed to have ever had any claim upon his Maker, he might, I think, most reasonably have expected to have been either historically or supernaturally informed of the first beginning of things; that is, by some mode of communication, more certain and intelligible than through the medium of the visible works of nature. These may serve to disclose to us the power, and the wisdom, and the majesty of God; but they cannot inform us of his *will* and *design* in the *creation* of *man*. It is written, says the great Lord Bacon, “*Cœli enarrant gloriam Dei*,” “The Heavens declare the *glory* of God;” but it is not written, “*Cœli enarrant voluntatem Dei*.” His will and pleasure with regard to man must be sought for elsewhere; *de illis pronuntiatur*, “*ad legem et testimonia*”<sup>a</sup>.

And yet, when Reason shall have seduced us to discard Revelation, she has no appeal to

<sup>a</sup> *De Aug. Scient. lib. ix.*

make, but to the *volume* of *nature*. This, we are still told, with the utmost confidence, is fully sufficient for our instruction, not only in all virtue and godliness of living, but in the only true religion, and the worship due to the Creator. And we are told besides, with a manifest insinuation that Christianity is defective in this respect, that the volume of nature is *universally legible*. It may be well therefore to record, as an event peculiarly connected with this age of Reason, and the more instructive on this account, that a view of nature, in the very same period of time, in the same country, amidst the same advantages and disadvantages of cultivated society, has but lately made a professed Theist of one of the most popular writers of the Continent, and an Atheist of a second. Christians may differ as to the interpretation of the language of Scripture; but none deny the finger of God in it: whereas in this case it appears that a close study of the volume of nature, a philosophical consideration of the whole system, metaphysical, physical, and moral, terminated in *atheism* <sup>(2)</sup>. The case is undeniable. Even an Atheist must here be believed on his word.

Had

Had not the author of *The System of Nature*<sup>b</sup>, to which I allude, been a confirmed Atheist, it is impossible he could have written, much more have published, such a work: indeed he claims to be believed upon this very ground<sup>c</sup>.

This surely will not be received as an unimportant digression, when it serves so strongly to shew the fallibility of human Reason, upon such subjects; and when we know besides, which is true, that the work above mentioned, which is argumentative from beginning to end, appeared at the very time when, of those confederate with the author in the overthrow of all revealed Religion, one very eminent writer<sup>d</sup> was insisting upon the full sufficiency of natural Religion, as well for instruction in the worship due to God, as in the conduct and regulation of our own lives; while another<sup>e</sup> was asserting of the book of

<sup>b</sup> Published under the name of *Mirabaud*. The real author is generally supposed to have been Diderot.

<sup>c</sup> “Si ce Dieu tout-puissant est jaloux de ses prérogatives— comment permet-il qu’un mortel comme moi ose attaquer ses droits, ses titres, son existence même ?” Ch. iii. part. ii.

<sup>d</sup> Voltaire.

<sup>e</sup> Rousseau, *Emile*, tom. iii.

Nature, that “none were excusable for neglecting to study it, because it speaks to all conditions of men, a language intelligible to every mind :” and that “*whoever could say, there is no God*, must be a falsifier, or insane :” and while here at home, the author of the *Age of Reason* was confidently assuring us, that “the visible creation is the *only word of God*, which every man can read, and which reveals all that is necessary for man to know of God’.”

But this is mere sophistry : there is nothing more essential to our forming correct notions of the Deity, than that we should be properly instructed respecting the *origin of evil* : and that we are not to expect to derive such instruction from a mere view of the visible creation, besides the instances adduced above, is evident from the great diversity of opinions that have prevailed upon this subject ; many of which, so far from serving to elevate our thoughts to an independent Being, or to a supreme moral Governor of the world, have a manifest tendency to rob the Deity of both these attributes. For as it would seem im-

<sup>1</sup> *Age of Reason*, pp. 26, 27.

possible to reconcile the false systems of antiquity with the *independence* of the Supreme Being; so I think it would be equally impossible to bring the modern systems to accord with his *moral government* of the world.

The Socinians, and modern Unitarians, as they style themselves (<sup>3</sup>), deny, as is well known, the existence of an evil Being; and will not receive the common interpretation of the Scriptures, in regard to the temptation and fall of man. The transgression of our first parents, according to the latter especially, as set forth in a very recent publication<sup>2</sup>, proceeded, not from the violation of one plain, easy, and intelligible restriction, the compliance with which might as fully have established their freedom of will, and constituted them moral beings, as their disobedience and transgression; a restriction so communicated as to be their instruction and security, rather than a snare to them: but, as the publication alluded to sets forth, from “the *selfish, jealous, malign-*

<sup>2</sup> *Lindsey on the Divine Government*, 1802. See p. 215.

“ *nant, cruel, impure, envious, fraudulent,*  
 “ *ambitious desires*” *implanted* in them. This is the present Socinian opinion of the origin of moral evil! Every corrupt desire and base principle that can be thought of, *implanted* in our first progenitors by God himself! Can such a representation of matters be thought consistent with God’s attributes of mercy and goodness? Is not this to say, in the very worst sense of the expression, that “ God  
 “ hath caused us to err<sup>h</sup>?”

And what other interpretation can we put on the reasonings of those modern reformers, who still contend so earnestly for the doctrine of *necessity*? Never was this doctrine carried to so great an extent as it has been of late: we are confidently told, that there is no operation of the mind or body, that can be free. We are not free to act, nor free to choose, nor free to deliberate about our choice, nor free to will whether we shall deliberate or not (<sup>4</sup>). Our judgments, and our feelings, and our most hid-

<sup>h</sup> Compare Mr. Hume’s notions, as admirably set forth in *Bp. Horne’s Letters on Infidelity*, Letter V.



den sentiments are all alike subject to the law of necessity<sup>i</sup>; and to pretend to be free, we are told, is to pretend to act without motives<sup>k</sup>. According to the most modern systems, we are such mere machines, that one writer has even ventured to assure us<sup>l</sup>, that, in the case of murder, “the assassin can  
“no more help the murder he commits,  
“than the dagger can, which he employs.”<sup>(5)</sup> That is, for it is so explained, that the causes and motives, that determine the one, are as necessary and irresistible as those that determine the other.

It is in vain to plead any distinction between rational and mechanical motives<sup>(6)</sup>; in the modern systems all motives are alike mechanical in their operations, and *mind* is universally as passive as the dullest matter<sup>m</sup>: indeed the soul itself is considered, by one

<sup>i</sup> See *Priestley's Illustrations*, pp. 287, 288. *Système de la Nature*, &c.

<sup>k</sup> *Pol. Justice*, b. iv. c. 7. and *Priestley's Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism*. Dr. Price's answer was, that he could conceive no assertion more groundless.

<sup>l</sup> *Godwin, Pol. Just.* p. 689. Compare *Letters on Infidelity*, before cited. Lett. V.

<sup>m</sup> “Mind is an agent in no other sense than matter is an agent.” *Godwin, Pol. Just.* vol. ii. 317.

popular writer, as altogether material<sup>n</sup>. We are not suffered to appeal to Scripture to decide for us, nor to common sense, or common feeling: for the Christian Revelation *would*, we are told, *have* been openly adapted to the doctrine of necessity, had the bulk of mankind been *philosophers*<sup>o</sup>! And when it is admitted and granted to us, that all men have a consciousness of a power to do what they will, we are taught to look upon this only as a deception<sup>(7)</sup>; a deception so ill managed indeed, that while nature is said to have designed to impose upon men in general, she has inadvertently given to some sagacity enough to see through the imposture<sup>p</sup>.

No circumstances of character or disposition<sup>(8)</sup>, no cultivation of good habits, or encouragement of evil ones, can be suffered to make any difference between the virtuous and the wicked, as *necessary* beings; they are equally propelled by motives, over which they have no power, and governed by causes the most certain and irresistible. Instead of

<sup>n</sup> Priestley.

<sup>o</sup> See *Priestley's Free Discussion*, &c.

<sup>p</sup> See *Beattie on Truth*, p. 313.

being in any instance the authors or beginners of any events whatsoever, to use their own expressions, men are only “the vehicles through which certain causes operate<sup>a</sup>.” The very first principles of Religion are turned against us; laws founded on rewards and punishments, we are told, *must* infer, that such motives have a regular and uniform influence on the mind, and therefore establish the doctrine of necessity<sup>r</sup>. But surely, if this reasoning is right, the common course of events must appear to be in open contradiction to it; for how could punishment itself ever become necessary, if the mere dread of it was sufficient, as a restraining motive, to prevent transgression? How could some incur punishment, and others not, if the motives had an uniform influence? And how, after all, could any expect to be punished by a moral Being, for actions altogether necessary and unavoidable?

But the numberless inconsistencies to be met with in the works I have in view, would

<sup>a</sup> *Polit. Just.* b. iv. c. 8. or as Diderot expresses it, “Instrumens passifs entre les mains de la nécessité.” *Système de la Nature*, ch. vi.

<sup>r</sup> *Hume's Essays*.

amply serve to shew, how difficult it is by any arguments to support a system so entirely in opposition to our common sentiments and common feelings. Such inconsistencies it would be easy to point out, and they might be insisted upon with considerable effect, if the case required it: but there is one inconsistency, into which all these writers have fallen, which I think may well serve us as a security against the bad effects to which the doctrine naturally leads. For, exclusive of the false notions it must tend to give us of the Deity, as moral governor of the world, I know no danger so great to be apprehended from this system, as that very obvious one, of setting men entirely free from every sense of responsibility. To expect to be punished by a good God, for actions which he himself is supposed to have rendered as necessary and determinate as the revolutions of the stars, or the falling of heavy bodies, if not contrary to the systems of modern philosophy, must assuredly be allowed to be entirely contrary to the plainest dictates of common sense and common reason.

It may be well therefore to notice, that  
none

none of the modern advocates of this doctrine allow us to draw such a conclusion (<sup>9</sup>); they even go so far as to assert, that their system is not only friendly to religion and morality, but indispensably necessary to both: that, so far from rendering us incapable of offence, or not amenable to justice, it is the only system under which we can become either amenable to justice, or capable of offence.

This may seem very extraordinary, and I am far from thinking it capable of being rendered in any manner intelligible: but it is of *this* importance to us certainly, that it reduces the question to a mere *nullity*. If we can by any arguments be shewn to be capable of morality, and amenable to the justice of God or man, under a system of strict necessity, we are only brought to the same state, in which both common sense and religion would place us. And while there is certainly no advantage to be gained by the exchange of one system for the other, we shall do well to reflect, that, before we can adopt the system of fatalism, we must consent to abandon every distinction which now seems to raise us above brute matter,

and to elevate us to a resemblance of the Deity ! a resemblance, it is true, of finite to infinite ; but which may with reverence be spoken of, and which enters into the description of the Mosaic cosmogony. Instead of the plain and simple account of things, which the Scripture gives us, that God was pleased, from the first moment of man's creation, to set before him, for his free choice, " good and evil, life or death," we must bring ourselves to think so unworthily of our Maker, as that HE hath necessarily " caused us to err," as my text expresses it ; and that a Being of infinite perfections, of power infinite, of wisdom infinite, of *goodness* infinite, " had need of the sinful man !"

Instead of believing, as the Scriptures teach us, that moral evil among men had its origin in the wilful infringement of one trifling restriction amidst the most magnificent profusion of favours, we must believe, at the hazard of all the consequences that common sense would naturally deduce from such a system, that moral evil proceeds from the original constitution of our nature, and is,

<sup>s</sup> Deut. xxx. 15.

and ever has been, altogether inevitable. We must be contented to believe, that we have no certain and authentic account of the first beginning of things, though such a conclusion must compel us to acknowledge, that we have no account *more* authentic of the consummation and end. If moral evil was not introduced into the world, as the Scriptures represent, we have no right, nor any reason to persuade ourselves, that it will be abolished, as they propose. For it is only those who are prepared to believe, that “in “ Adam all died,” who may be allowed to hope, that “in Christ all shall be made “ alive.”

But to advert once more to the doctrine of necessity. Having ventured to pronounce it to be an inconsistency to conceive *penal* laws to be reconcileable to a system of fatalism, I shall, for my own vindication, offer one example, such as the time will allow me, of the method in which one of the greatest opponents of free-will and free agency<sup>u</sup> would attempt to reconcile them. He is speaking, it is true, only of the laws

<sup>t</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 22.

<sup>u</sup> Diderot.

of man; but if man can have a right to punish a necessary being, knowing him to be such, we can scarce deny the same power to God. “If,” says he, “there shall be found any persons so constituted as to *re-* *sist*, or be *insensible* to, the *motives*, which actuate the rest of mankind, they are not fit to live among them; and their *rebellious* and *unsociable wills* not admitting of being *modified* so as to become conformable to the general interest, the society will naturally oppose them, and inflict *pains* and *penalties* on these beings, upon whom the *motives* presented to them have not had the *effects* that were to be expected.” (10)

This is the way in which we are taught to acknowledge the justice and propriety of penal laws, under a system of necessity. I am much mistaken, if any expressions could have been selected more thoroughly in contradiction to the very system itself. It is a point however, which we must leave to Fatalists themselves to settle; it has only been my object to shew, that in not setting us free from the operation of penal laws, and moral responsibility, it is a system from which we can  
reap



reap no possible advantage; and as we may never expect to be able by any arguments to render it more reconcileable to our common feelings than to the word of Scripture, even as a philosophical speculation, it may be considered as useless and unsatisfactory.

The same may, I think, be said of the doctrine concerning the *materiality* of the human soul; which, if granted, is *now* held not to stand in the way of our belief of its immortality hereafter\*, or of its capability of happiness or misery; or to be at all in opposition to the language of the holy Scriptures. But if this be so, it needs not, it is plain, though ever so capable of proof, interfere either with our hopes or our faith. The question indeed has been revived of late years, and the materiality of the soul strongly insisted upon, for a particular end and purpose: a purpose, which seems to betray the cause it was meant to support; namely, to overthrow the doctrines of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, as professed by

\* See *Hartley*, p. 303. conclusion of the first part of his *Observations on Man*; and *Priestley's Disquisitions*. See also *Dr. Lealand's View of Deistical Writers*, vol. ii. p. 11. 5th edit.

the established Church of these realms (""). But if these doctrines cannot be overthrown by a critical examination of the Scriptures, whence alone we profess to deduce them, we may surely well expect them to be proof against such metaphysical and abstruse disquisitions as the one alluded to.

Though it must still be acknowledged then, that Reason, unenlightened by Revelation, must be wholly incompetent to solve such questions as these; yet it may be of importance to us to be assured, that whatever advances she may be supposed to have made in other branches of knowledge, her latest speculations on the origin of evil, and the moral government of the world, so far from tending to remove any existing doubts and perplexities, have been more than ever uncertain and unsatisfactory; serving indeed to determine nothing, except perhaps that strange contradiction, that men are capable of being in a state of religion and morality, under a course of things entirely incompatible with either; for how can we be capable of morality, where every motive must have a determinate effect, and we are not free to choose between two? And how can  
we

we be prepared to serve and worship God, as a good and gracious Being, when we are taught to believe, that he has placed us in this world, only “to live in wickedness, and “to suffer, and not to know wherefore?”

And this incompetency of Reason to certify us of the truth of such important matters, (an incompetency actually capable of demonstration,) must surely not only incline us to set but small value on such vain speculations (<sup>12</sup>), but dispose us the more readily to believe, that somewhere or other the true and authentic history of the origin of the world must have been always preserved; that the history of man, from his first creation, must have been recorded; and that the only question which really concerns us is, where is the truth to be found?

Now I believe thus much may be safely asserted, that if the Mosaic cosmogony is not the true one, few will be found to contend for any others that are extant; and therefore, if I should appear to dwell longer on this part of my subject than is necessary, I hope it will be considered, that every thing which relates to revealed Religion depends ultimately on the authenticity of the Mosaic account  
of

of the creation and *fall* of *man*. For, as to the Christian Revelation, if we may trust to the testimony not only of Prophets and Apostles, but of our Lord himself, it was certainly not more designed to carry us forward to the end of time, than backward to its beginning; the new revelation having continual reference and relation to the old. A connection, I must add, the more fit to be insisted upon at present, because, in some very recent transactions on the continent, its importance has been in the most extraordinary manner disputed, and the authority of the *Pentateuch* particularly called in question.

I cannot conclude therefore this part of my Lecture, without earnestly exhorting those of my hearers, who may be at all liable to be led astray by the false philosophy of the times, not to suffer themselves to be deprived of the ancient and venerable account, which the Scriptures give of the first beginning of things, and more especially of the origin of moral evil, till they have examined carefully into every circumstance, that can be expected to throw light upon the subject. It is not the history of a single unconnected

connected event, or of a *few such*, as I remarked before, but of *many* events, closely, and I may add *marvellously* connected. And though it should seem to resemble, as an eminent Freethinker has asserted of it<sup>y</sup>, “those  
“fabulous accounts, which every nation  
“gives of its origin;” though *it should be*  
“full of prodigies and miracles;” though it  
should “give an account of a state of the  
“world, and of human nature, entirely dif-  
“ferent from the present<sup>z</sup>,” of “our fall  
“from that state;” of the “age of man ex-  
“tending to near a thousand years;” and of  
“the destruction of the world by a deluge;”  
let us remember, that if it is a record of  
that high authority, and that great anti-  
quity, which we suppose it to be, then these  
are the very things we might expect to find  
in it: a state of the world certainly dif-  
ferent from the present, and a state of hu-  
man nature entirely so, as well as of our fall  
from it; for nothing less can account for the  
*present* state of these things. Changes and  
revolutions there must have been, or the

<sup>y</sup> Hume.

<sup>z</sup> See *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, vol. ii. Letter xxviii.  
p. 98.

work of God will appear to have been originally and radically imperfect. Prodigies and miracles also we might expect to read of, if we will but consider the Pagan accounts of their own gross idolatries; by means of which, without prodigies and miracles, the true God would for ever perhaps have been excluded from this world of his own making: and as to the longevity of the patriarchal ages, and the destruction of the world by a deluge, they are not only supported by other historical testimonies of much repute, as is well known<sup>a</sup>, but the latter especially is, as it is my intention to shew in a future Discourse, in a very extraordinary manner confirmed by physical observations.

<sup>a</sup> Vid. *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. i. c. 3. *Grotius de Veritate R. Christi.* c. 16. and *Dr. Adams's Answer to Hume.* See also *Faber's Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. p. 119. and sect. 1. ch. iv. on the Deluge.

## NOTES TO SERMON IV.

---

Page 154. note (1).

*THE particulars of the account may to superficial enquirers appear allegorical, &c.]* All profane histories, which ascend so high as to the origin of the world and of mankind, are so fabulous and absurd, and so little to be regarded as authentic in their present dress, that we cannot be surprised that those who are disposed to regard the Mosaic cosmogony in the same light as other ancient histories, shall look for *fable*, when it treats of such remote and primæval matters.

I have already admitted that an air of mythology runs through the Mosaic history of the genesis and fall of man : but I have intimated at the same time, what is certainly the truth, that the first origin of things must have been in every particular not only so different from, but in some instances so *contrary* to present experience, [see *Campbell on Miracles*, pp. 212, 213. and *Wallace's various Prospects of Mankind*,] that the truest possible account *must to us* have appeared mythological. Nothing is more mythological to read of, perhaps, than a miracle : but it is capable of positive demonstration, that the world *could not have existed* without *many miracles*. See *Campbell* as above.

It may have been an ingenious device, and a very artful one, of the Pagans, to pretend to resolve their mythologies into allegories; for nothing else could possibly excuse the grossness and absurdity of most of them. [See them admirably exposed for their attempts, by Arnobius in his 5th book *contr. Gentes*.] But to suppose that there is no history of the first beginning of things, but what is *both* mythological and *fabulous*, is, on many accounts, exceedingly unwise, and contrary to Reason.

Much

Much ill, I apprehend, has arisen from an injudicious manner of beginning our researches. Many are too apt to think, that it is only the veracity of Moses that is concerned in the real character and authenticity of the first three chapters of Genesis; and they seem to regard it as a matter of perfect indifference, whether he wrote what is there written, of the origin of man and of evil, mythologically, allegorically, or historically; whether he was really the author of them, or only the collector of antiquated traditions, and fanciful legends; or whether indeed he had any thing at all to do with them. This was certainly the case with Dr. Geddes, and is the case with many German commentators of the present day, particularly M. Teller of Berlin, Eichhorn, Heizelmann, Crugel, &c. who all agree in treating the first three chapters of Genesis as fabulous, but with little agreement among themselves in other respects. Thus M. Teller thinks the second and third chapters *more ancient* than the *first*, while M. Eichhorn thinks the latter the most ancient of the three; a difference of opinion which affects M. Teller's chief argument; who contends, that the *first* chapter is *allegorical*, but the others *hieroglyphical*, and for that reason more ancient. In fact, they know nothing at all about them; which must be the case with all who pretend to judge of them, merely as the introduction to an ancient book.

The true way for a Christian to consider the matter, is to begin with the testimony of our *Saviour*, and the *Apostolic writers*, to the truth of this very ancient account of things. If we have any authentic information in regard to the *end* of the world, and the *future* hopes and expectations of man, it is unquestionably only in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; in the Evangelical histories and writings of the Apostles; in our Lord's own declarations, and the inspired evidence of his Disciples. Now if this information is "*from above*," shall we suppose that our Lord himself and his holy Apostles were ignorant of man's true *beginning*, or would have purposely and expressly connected the heavenly and sublime doctrines they had to communicate, with a parcel of Chaldean and Egyptian fables? for so M. Teller regards them; M. Eichhorn, &c. Dr. Geddes  
also,



also, and Dr. Priestley; much to their disgrace, as *Christians*, at all events.

The more the Mosaic account may seem to us mythological in style and matter, the more cautious we should be how we regard it as such, when we know of a surety, that not only St. Paul, but our Saviour referred to it, in the most solemn and striking manner. "For as in *Adam* all die," saith St. Paul, "*even so* in *CHRIST* shall all be made alive!" "The *first man Adam* was made a living soul; the *last Adam* was made a quickening spirit." "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the last man is the LORD from HEAVEN!" I Cor. xv. What should we think of St. Paul, if, in this most solemn manner, he had ventured to bring into comparison, our Saviour and Prometheus, or any other truly mythological personage? Or, when our blessed SAVIOUR reminds the Pharisees, "Have ye not read, that *THE* which made them in the beginning, made them male and female; and *said*, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh:'" that he had no truer history in view than a mere Oriental legend? Let us remember also, that, according to common ideas, and the usual course of things, this reference was to the *most mythological part*, perhaps, of the whole relation.

When we shall have satisfied ourselves of the manifest unreasonableness, and indeed the gross impiety, of supposing that our Saviour and his holy Apostles could make such solemn appeals to a mere mythological tale, "popular traditions and old songs," (as Dr. Geddes is pleased to call them,) let us consider what are the circumstances which render the Pagan mythologies in general so offensive. Are they not, that they give us very unbecoming notions of the Divine Nature, as well as of the interference of Providence in the affairs of men? But how do we find the Divine Nature represented in the rest of the Mosaic writings, and the other books of the Old Testament? most of them certainly written in times so remote, as to be stigmatized as eminently rude and barbarous: most of them the works, according to Mr. Hume, of "an ignorant and barbarous people, written in an age when they were

“still more barbarous.” See his *Essays*. “Shall we assert,” he goes on to say, “that in more ancient times, before the knowledge of letters, or the discovery of any art or science, men entertained the principles of pure *Theism*? that is, while they were ignorant and barbarous, they discovered *truth*?” *Essays*, vol. ii. 417.

The advocate for the inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures might thank Mr. Hume for this remark. The very remote and incomparable antiquity of the Bible is not to be disputed: consult *Josephus*, *Pbilo*, *Justin Martyr*, *Grotius*, *Stillingfleet*, &c. &c. Nevertheless therein are to be found innumerable descriptions of the Deity, not only the most sublime, but the most just and appropriate that can be conceived. “Nous voyons ‘avec la plus grande certitude historique,’” say the Jews in their memorial to M. Teller, “que Moïse ‘trouva déjà chez les premiers peres de sa nation, comme ‘un héritage respectable, des dogmes purs, et des principes de religion clairs et dégagés de toute Idolâtrie, ‘et de tout Athéisme. Ces Patriarches avoient sur- tout cherché à conserver la doctrine d’un Dieu spirituel, imperceptible aux sens. Nous ne trouvons ‘cette doctrine dans la même pureté chez aucune autre nation.’” Mr. Hume thinks the truth could not have been discovered so early as the times of Moses: the Jews of Berlin think they were discovered much earlier. Mr. Hume is not to be excused for his want of discernment, or want of honesty, in pretending that the Bible does not contain the principles of pure Theism: the Prussian Jews are not to be excused for their dulness, in not regarding such correct ideas of the Divine Nature, as a certain proof of the inspiration of the sacred Writings. What indeed Mr. Hume’s ideas of pure Theism were, it may be difficult to say: but there is little doubt that he would have objected to the sacred books, as far as they represent God to be infinitely superior to mankind; for this must have the fault he censures, of *checking all rivalry and emulation on the part of man, to the loss of all the virtues that aggrandise a people, including particularly ‘activity, spirit, courage, magnanimity, ‘and love of liberty.’* These qualities, it seems, are only compatible with a religion, in which the gods are  
conceived

conceived to be little better and little superior to man, as in all the Pagan systems. Another recommendation the Pagan systems possess over the sacred books, in Mr. Hume's idea; they allow us "to be more at ease in our addresses to such deities." See his *Natural History of Religion*, §. x. p. 454; a work more calculated to prove the absolute necessity of revelation than almost any I ever perused; though certainly written with a design as opposite as possible.

Josephus, with great propriety, challenges his readers to examine thoroughly into the matter, and to say whether Moses had not invariably ascribed to the Deity, not only his proper nature, but actions suitable to that nature; free from all the vanities and absurdities of the Pagan mythologies; though he lived in times so remote, as to have been at liberty to invent, had he seen fit; "for he lived," says he, "full two thousand years ago, a distance of time to which the poets dare not carry up the birth of their gods, the actions of their ancestors, or the establishment of their laws." The passage is very remarkable. Ἡδη τοίνυν τὸς ἐντευχομένους τοῖς βιβλίοις παρακαλῶ τὴν γνώμην Θεῶν προσανέχειν, καὶ δοκιμάζειν τὸν ἡμέτερον Νομοθέτην, εἰ τὴν τε φύσιν αὐτῷ ἀξίως κατενόησε, καὶ τῇ δυνάμει πρεπέσας αἰετὰς πράξεις ἀντέθηκε, ΠΑΣΗΣ ΚΑΘΑΡΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΠΕΡΙ Αὐτοῦ ΦΥΛΑΞΑΣ ΛΟΓΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡ' ΑΛΛΟΙΣ ΑΣΧΗΜΟΝΟΣ ΜΥΘΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ· Καίτοιγε, ὅσον ἐπὶ μήκει χρόνου καὶ παλαιότητι, πολλὴν ἔχων ἄδειαν ψεύδων πλασμάτων· γέγονεν γὰρ πρὸ ἐτῶν δισχιλίων, ἐφ' ὅσον πλῆθος αἰῶνος ἐδ' αὐτῶν οἱ ποιηταὶ τὰς γενέσεις τῶν Θεῶν, μήτιγε τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων πράξεις, ἣ τὸς νόμους ἀνενεγκῆν ἐπόλμησαν. *Ant. Jud. lib. i. p. 3.*

Notwithstanding this, Mr. Paine is pleased to assert, in his *Age of Reason*, (and I cannot forbear to record it, as a standing reproach to his taste and discernment, and no unequivocal sign of his great ignorance,) that "almost the only parts in the book called the Bible, that convey to us any idea of God, are some chapters in Job and the sixteenth Psalm."—"I recollect no other; those parts are true deistical compositions; for they treat of the Deity through his works; they are founded upon natural philosophy."

But is God to be regarded *only* as the *Creator* of the universe? merely as the efficient cause of the visible scene

scene of things? Have we nothing to do with his providential government of the world, and the mode of his existence? Other Deists are not so easily satisfied: they think it a great thing to be able to comprehend his moral and metaphysical attributes; *unity, spirituality, omnipotence, ubiquity, infinity*, and, above all, his *goodness and mercy*. But ancient as the Bible is, and proud as modern Deists are of their first principles of theology, there is not one of these properties and attributes of the Divine Nature, which is not duly assigned to God in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, in such sublimity of language, and with such force of expression, as, not only never have been exceeded, but, in the opinion of some of the most unexceptionable judges, never have been equalled. See *Lowth's Lectures on Hebrew Poetry*, Lect. I. *Addison's Evidences of the Christian Religion*. See *Sir William Jones's* opinion in his *Anniversary Discourses* at Calcutta; *Bishop Watson's Apology*, pp. 136, 151, 208. and, for a comparison between the Hebrew and Pagan descriptions of the Deity, *Richards's Bampton Lectures*, Sermon VI. Sermon VIII.

When we have satisfied ourselves that St. Paul and others of the Apostles, and even Jesus Christ himself, referred to the Mosaic cosmogony, as a true and literal history of the commencement of things—when we have duly weighed and considered the exceeding great absurdity and impiety of supposing they could refer to nothing better than a mythological legend—when we have certified ourselves that the beginning of the world, of man, and of evil, must have been so entirely different from the common course of things, and, as far as regards the creation of animals and vegetables, so independent of all secondary causes, as to be, in every sense of the terms, *perfectly marvellous* and *miraculous*—when we have brought ourselves to reflect, that, strange and unusual as the account may seem, every part of it is of so great importance, that we could not do without it, (for this I think demonstrable, in respect to the origin of man, and the origin of evil—) *Then* we may be prepared to examine more minutely into the drift of the history, and to appreciate the peculiar importance of the several incidents.

It would be impossible to go through the whole, in  
a note,

a note, already perhaps too long : but I shall select *two* of the incidents, because they are particularly important if true, and have been particularly exposed to ridicule on a supposition of their being false. The first is the creation of woman ; the other, the law given to the Protoplasts. The former is unquestionably of great importance, because, as we have seen above, our Saviour referred to it, and to settle a very important point in the laws of society. The second is very important, because no less than the introduction of sin, and fall of the human race, and consequently the redemption of mankind, are all intimately connected with it.

First then, in regard to the creation of woman. That the secondary causes for the propagation of the species could not operate in the production of the first man, or the first woman, is most evident. But though it is a peculiar merit in the Mosaic cosmogony, that where second causes could not be supposed to act, they are totally kept out of sight ; yet in regard to the creation of man and of woman, the sacred Historian has entered more than in any other instance into the *modus operandi* of creation : and certainly not without reason. How the world in general was created, we need not be informed as to the exact *quomodo* of its formation and arrangement : but it is not to be concluded therefore, that we need not have been instructed in the *quomodo* of *man's* creation, or in that of the *woman* ; for the *terrestrial* nature of man's body, as distinct from the soul, and on which many important theological questions are known to depend, is thereby particularly shewn, and the identity of nature in the two sexes expressly demonstrated ; the former being necessary not only to the due apprehension of man's nature, but the vindication of God's power and providence ; for the terrestrial nature of man's body became afterwards a leading dogma in profane philosophy ; whereupon the philosophers always endeavoured to fix the origin of evil : so that it would seem to be most reasonable that this distinction in the human nature should have been particularly noticed. For to shew that God made man of the dust of the ground, was a vindication of his power over matter, to which often has been attributed a necessary and independent existence, which in after-times was particularly

the doctrine of the Stoics, as is well known. But to return to the origin of woman.

In the creation of the human species, there was a foundation to be laid for the future *society* of the different members of it, and for the moral as well as physical union in particular of the two sexes. Of two rational beings, to which should the dominion of the new world be assigned? Was Adam to *invest himself* with the superiority in virtue of his strength and manhood? and was he to receive woman at the hands of his Maker, as he received the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, as a being altogether inferior and distinct? Was it not better that every foundation of endearment should be laid at the first; and, to obviate jealousy and rivalry, and much more any undue assumption of superiority, that there should be an equality of rights, and the same manifest identity of nature, as was to be provided for in the after propagation of the species? Κρατῆν δὲ τὸν Ἄνδρα τῆς γυναικός, says Plutarch, ἔχ' ὡς δεσπότην κτήματος, ἀλλ' ὡς ΨΥΧΗΝ ΣΩΜΑΤΟΣ, συμπαθῆντα καὶ συμπεφυκότα τῇ εὐνοίᾳ. A sentence, says Wollaston, [*Religion of Nature*, 159.] which ought to be written in letters of gold!

And that there was such occasion for marking the identity of nature in this instance, we may particularly conclude from the reasoning of Mr. Hume. "For," says he, "were there a species of creature intermingled with men, which, though rational, were possessed of such inferior strength, both of body and mind, that they were incapable of all resistance, the *necessary consequence*, I think, is, that we should be bound by the law of humanity, to give gentle usage to these creatures; but should not, properly speaking, lie under any restraint of *justice* with regard to them; nor could they possess any right or property exclusive of such arbitrary lords." *Essays*, vol. ii. 256, 257.

It could not be of importance to the brute irrational animals to be certified of this identity of nature so particularly; [see the *Summa* of St. Thomas, P. I. Quæst. xcii. art. 2.] but the physical instincts and appetites, which would guide *them* to what was right, were not likely in mankind to be the foundation of all those moral virtues, and chaste affections, on which the  
good

good of society in general, and the happiness of private life more particularly, were to depend: and therefore I look upon the whole to be fully and adequately explained in the 23d and 24th verses of the second chapter, to which our Saviour alluded in the passage already referred to. Matth. xix. 4, 5, 6. see also Mark x. 6, 7. There I find the divine institution of marriage, and all the private virtues and charities flowing therefrom: there I find "God's best gift to mankind;" that union of souls, and interests; that participation of pains and pleasures; which tend to heighten all the enjoyments, and mitigate all the sorrows of life; and which expanding itself in the propagation, nurture, and education of children, lays the foundation for every comfort and security derivable from society.

But none of these things can have their proper foundation in a *mere fable*. No allegory, no poetical *mythos*, could possibly serve our purpose. Dr. Geddes could derive all these things equally with ourselves from the Mosaic cosmogony: but in treating the latter as a mere fable, he totally and entirely destroys its use; besides contradicting St. Paul, and invalidating or rendering void his whole argument. 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.

See, as to the peculiar appointment of woman's creation, *Leslie's Works*, vol. i. 242. *Theodoretus* περί Προνοίας, Λογ. ζ'. 141. Dr. *Priestley's Comparison of the Institutions of Moses and the Hindoos*, p. 153. and Dr. *Jamieson's History of the Pentateuch*.

I have dwelt the longer on this, because it is almost alleged to be the very reason of M. Teller's infidelity, as to the truth of the three first chapters of Genesis; for he thus excuses himself: "Voilà sur quoi il faut prendre parti, à moins de vouloir donner gain de cause aux railleries fines et grossières des ennemis de la Religion. Combien de fois n'a-t-on pas tourné en ridicule la côte d'Adam?" To which M. de Luc very properly answers, "Quand on ne fait pas mépriser le ridicule de-  
raisonnable, on mérite d'être victime;" and then proceeds to state the extreme folly of pretending to object, where we have no means whatever of deciding the case: "Il est évident qu'on ne sauroit rien affirmer ni nier à priori sur la manière de la création, soit en général, soit dans aucune de ses parties."

I proceed now to the law given to the Protoplasts, which has been regarded as hieroglyphical, allegorical, and wholly fabulous; and which, if we were in all cases ignominiously to give way to raillery and ridicule, would be among the first parts of the Mosaic records to be abandoned. That "the whole human race should be condemned for eating an *apple*," is an old taunt, and will, no doubt, perpetually be revived, because it is certainly according to the letter of the Scripture, except indeed as to the absurd and groundless designation of the particular fruit. The law is thought trifling: why so? Can the wilful transgression of any express command of God be so? But what if murder, theft, adultery, or perjury, had been forbidden? would not this have been an useless and unnecessary suggestion of moral disorder in a state of perfect innocence, which might have been preserved? Besides, how were any of these crimes possible? or how indeed, as stated already in another place, could *any* of the *laws* of the *Decalogue* be brought to apply to the situation of the Protoplasts? These things are certainly not sufficiently thought of, when men object to this particular part of the Mosaic history. Whatever was the law, the transgression of Adam might be proved to be, a *complication* of sins. [See *Edwards's Preservative against Socinianism*, Disc. II. p. 34.] At all events, if the offence be considered as trifling, it is a good remark which one author makes, that, "instead of contending against God for ordaining the forfeiture of what he gave them, for such a trifle of offence, the proper argument is certainly against our first parents, for not fulfilling such a real trifle of obedience, where there had been such magnificence of favour." *New Theory of Redemption*, vol. i. 162. The same author in another place observes, "Nor is it the least surprising that immortality was forfeited by one offence, when the observance of one single circumstance was the only thing required in order to its preservation."

In short, when all the circumstances of the case are fairly taken into account, (many of which cannot be adverted to at present,) we shall surely be brought readily to acquiesce in the opinion of the learned Bishop Bull, that "this precept to Adam was no such slight  
"and



“and easy precept as some have fancied; but was at once a bridle to the deliciousness of his sense, and a check to the curiosity of his reason; a great experiment of his self-denial, and in general a call to the divine life”—That it laid “a far greater restraint on man’s *rational* appetite; for the tree forbidden was by God himself styled the tree of *knowledge*; and it was a motive that seduced Eve, that the fruit of it was good to make one wise.” *Sermons*, vol. iii. 1087. 1089. See also the *Summa Theologiæ* of St. Thomas, Part III. Quæst. clxiii. Art. 1. and *Parad. Lost*. b. vii. 543. b. viii. 323. “Οὐ κενοῖς ἐπιστεύσαμεν μύθοις, οὐδὲ ἀναποδείκτοις λόγοις, ἀλλὰ μετ’ οἷς Πνεύματος θείου, καὶ δυνάμει βεβύηται, καὶ τεθήλοσι χάριτι.” Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryphone,

Page 156. note (2).

*In this case a close study of the volume of nature, &c. terminated in Atheism.*] It cannot be supposed that I mean to insinuate, that a study of nature is *likely* in general to lead to Atheism. I have adduced the fact alluded to, only to shew how incomparably superior the light of Revelation is, to the casual, variable, and often perverse deductions of Reason; and how indispensably necessary its *authority* is, to establish the truth and certainty of some of the most important principles of religion and morality: even indeed, of the very being and existence of God! And as it is the principal object of these Lectures to shew, that, in this boasted age of Reason, we are not arrived at any greater certainty as to those matters, than heretofore, how can this be better proved than from the declarations and concessions of Infidels themselves? I have therefore thought it not amiss to shew whither Reason may conduct us, when restrained by no authority, and sensible of no superior. And while Voltaire, and Rousseau, and Helvetius; Hume, Gibbon, and Paine, have been endeavouring to convert men, as they would term it, from Religion to Reason, from Christianity to Deism, under a pretence that our Reason is light sufficient, and cannot fail to secure us in all due obedience to God, and love to man, it may be well to know that their cotemporary, friend, and associate, Diderot, thought himself able, by the *very same means* they

they would have adopted to convert a man from Christianity to Deism, to convert him further, from Deism to *Atheism*, viz. *a study of nature*, and an appeal to our own feelings and judgment. For the requisites he insists on are expressly as follow: “La réflexion; de l’étude, des connoissances; une longue chaîne d’expériences; l’habitude de contempler la nature, la science des vraies causes de ses phénomènes divers; de ses combinaisons, de ses loix; des êtres qui les composent, et de leurs différentes propriétés—Pour être *Athée*, il faut l’avoir Méditée!” *Système de la Nature*, ch. xiii. Part II.

Are not these the very qualifications which the Deist would insist upon, as invariably sufficient to prove the existence and attributes of God? But how are men to be expected to agree in any conclusions to be drawn from a view of nature, when Spinoza could so exclude final causes, as to ridicule it as a childish fancy to think, that eyes were designed to see with, teeth to chew with, the sun to give light, &c. &c.? How are men to be expected to form correct notions of the Deity without Revelation, when Mr. Hume insists upon it, in his *Natural History of Religion*, that polytheism and idolatry *must have been* the primitive religion of *uninstructed* man? when Lord Bolingbroke asserts, that “the first true principles of all theology could not be established till the manhood of philosophy?” and when Lord Shaftesbury could take the pains to arrange and classify the many different opinions men might come to entertain concerning Providence, separately or mixed; as, first, they might be simply *Theists*; *Atheists*; *Polytheists*; *Dæmonists*: or these might be mixed; as, first, *Theism with Dæmonism*; secondly, *Dæmonism with Polytheism*, &c. &c. See the whole in his *Enquiry concerning Virtue*, Part I. §. 2.

Nor, if Voltaire, Helvetius, &c. had known what they were about, could they have supposed, that they were better advocates for the sufficiency of Reason. For thus does the former contradict himself, in his *Poem on Natural Religion*:

“Je ne puis ignorer ce qu’ordonna mon maître;  
 “Il m’a donné sa loi, puisqu’il m’a donné l’être:

“La

“ La morale *uniforme*, en tout *temps*, en tout *lieu*,  
 “ A des siècles sans fin, nous parle au nom de Dieu.”

Afterwards, speaking of the Chinese, Tartars, &c. he says,

“ *Différents* dans leurs *mœurs*, ainsi qu'en leurs *hommages*,  
 “ Ils lui font tous tenir un différent langage.  
 “ Tous se font donc trompés”——

The poem concludes with a prayer, which begins,

“ O Dieu, qu'on *meconnoît*, ô Dieu, que tout annonce!”

Helvetius also, though forward to assure his fellow-creatures that they require no guide, nor need any supernatural instruction, says of the present scene of things, “ Les Vérités sont par la main du ciel semées  
 “ ça et là, dans une *forêt obscure*, et *sans route*. Un  
 “ chemin borde cette forêt; il est fréquenté par une  
 “ infinité de voyageurs. Parmi eux il est des curieux, à  
 “ qui l'épaisseur et l'obscurité même du bois inspirent  
 “ le desir d'y pénétrer: ils y entrent; mais embarrassés  
 “ dans les ronces, déchirés par les épines, et rebutés dès  
 “ les premiers pas, ils abandonnent l'entreprise, et re-  
 “ gagnent le chemin.” *De l'Homme*, vol. ii. 307.

Rousseau's confession and acknowledgment of his own ignorance we have already noticed, Note 1. Disc. II. But all these advocates for Natural Religion are, and ever have been, notoriously inconsistent in regard to the sufficiency of human Reason. See Dr. Leland's admirable *Reply to Tindal's Christianity as old as the Creation*; and his *View of Deistical Writers*, Letters ix. xxvi.

Page 159. note (3).

*The Socinians, and modern Unitarians, as they style themselves.*] Mr. Fuller, in his comparison of the Calvinistic and Socinian systems, very reasonably excuses himself for applying generally the name Socinian to the Anti-Trinitarians, in the following terms: “ The  
 “ reason why the term *Socinian* is preferred in the fol-  
 “ lowing Letters to that of *Unitarians*, is not for the  
 “ mean purpose of reproach, but because the latter  
 “ name is not a *fair* one. The term, as constantly ex-  
 “ plained by themselves, signifies those professors of  
 “ Christianity, who worship ONE GOD. But this is not  
 “ that

“ that wherein they can be *allowed* to be distinguished  
 “ from others ; for what professors of Christianity are  
 “ there, who profess to worship a plurality of Gods ?  
 “ Trinitarians profess to be Unitarians also : they, as  
 “ well as their opponents, believe there is but *one God*.  
 “ To give Socinians this name therefore *exclusively*,  
 “ would be granting them the very point, which they  
 “ seem so desirous to take for granted ; that is to say,  
 “ the point in debate.” *Preface*, p. ix.

*Page 160. note (4).*

*We are not free to act, nor free to choose, nor free to deliberate about our choice, &c.]* “ Voici comment on peut  
 “ réduire la question de la liberté de l’homme : la li-  
 “ berté ne se peut rapporter à aucune des fonctions  
 “ connues de notre ame. Car l’ame, au moment où  
 “ elle agit, ne peut agir autrement ; au moment où elle  
 “ choisit, ne peut délibérer autrement ; au moment  
 “ qu’elle veut, ne peut vouloir autrement, parce qu’une  
 “ chose ne peut exister et ne point exister en même  
 “ tems. Or, c’est ma volonté telle qu’elle est qui me fait  
 “ délibérer ; c’est ma délibération telle qu’elle est qui  
 “ me fait choisir ; c’est mon choix tel qu’il est qui me  
 “ fait agir ; c’est ma détermination telle qu’elle est qui  
 “ me fait exécuter ce que ma délibération m’a fait  
 “ choisir ; et je n’ai délibéré que parce que j’ai eu des  
 “ motifs qui m’ont fait délibérer, et parce qu’il n’étoit  
 “ pas possible que je ne voulusse pas délibérer. Ainsi la  
 “ liberté ne se trouve ni dans la volonté, ni dans la dé-  
 “ libération, ni dans le choix, ni dans l’action ; quand  
 “ donc peut-elle exercer sa liberté ? C’est aux théolo-  
 “ giens à nous le dire.” *Système de la Nature*, vol. i.  
 221. Note. But are not *deliberation* and *choice* at least  
*useless* in a system of *necessity* ?

The continual inconsistencies, into which those writers  
 fall who would support the doctrine of necessity, may  
 be seen as well as any where in that atheistical work.  
 The xivth and xvth chapters seem to be in complete  
 contradiction to the xiiiith. In the latter the author  
*recommends fatalism*, because “ c’est le Fataliste qui doit  
 “ être *humble* et modéré par *principe* ; (we are not in-  
 clined to dispute this consequence ; Dr. Hartley also  
 strongly insists upon it ; ) “ n’est-il pas forcé de recon-  
 “ noître

“noître qu’il ne possède rien qu’il n’ait reçu?” Certainly: but in ch. xiv. the author quarrels with the *superstitious*, (that is, the *religionists*, who teach the doctrine of future rewards and punishments,) and urges on the other hand, that man be taught to lay aside all such vain fears; “qu’il apprenne à *s’estimer* lui-même; “qu’il ait l’*ambition* de *mériter* l’estime des autres.” We are exhorted not to concern ourselves about “notre sort à venir,” but *seek* to be useful to our contemporaries and posterity; “qu’un *amour légitime* de nous-mêmes nous fasse goûter d’avance le charme des louanges que nos voulons *mériter*; et, lorsque nous en sommes *dignes*, apprenons à *nous aimer*, à *nous estimer* nous-mêmes.” This is for those, who by the natural consequence of the system are “forcés de reconnoître qu’ils ne possèdent rien qu’ils n’aient reçu:” that is, either physically or *morally*, for so the whole work imports. Dr. Hartley’s expression is, that the system of fatalism must produce the “most profound humility and self-annihilation, since according to it we are entirely destitute of all power and perfection in ourselves.” This very learned and pious author indeed refers what we *have* to the grace and goodness of God; but the author of the *Système de la Nature*, only to the accidental motions and combinations of matter. But to proceed. The character of the virtuous man is thus described: “L’intérêt de l’homme vertueux est de *mériter* par sa conduite l’amour et l’approbation des autres, et de ne rien faire qui puisse le dégrader à ses propres yeux.” And in his definition of Virtue, he says, “La vertu n’est que l’art de se rendre heureux soi-même de la félicité des autres.” Of the virtuous man he also thus speaks, in another place: “Quand l’univers entier seroit injuste pour l’homme du bien, il lui reste l’avantage de *s’aimer*, de *s’estimer* lui-même: *nulle force ne peut lui ravir l’estime méritée par lui-même.*”

In his xviith chapter he reproves those who are weak enough to think the soul capable “de résister les impulsions de ses organes, &c.” But in his vindication of penal laws, he supposes the case of persons “assez mal constitués pour résister aux motifs qui agissent sur tous les autres.” Speaking of *suicide*, the author says this is lawful and *natural*, when pains and troubles be-  
set

set us; and his *proof* must be admitted to be *irresistible*! For the *same nature*, says he, that by a course of fatality brings these distresses upon us, “a travaillé pendant “des milliers d’années à former, dans le sein de la “terre, le fer qui *doit* trancher nos jours!!!” Could any one suppose that the very same writer who brings these heavy-charges against *nature*, should yet in express terms have affirmed, “L’on ne peut trop le répéter; “c’est dans l’erreur que nous trouverons la vraie source “des maux dont la race humaine est affligée; *ce n’est “point la nature* qui la rendit malheureuse.” Part. I. c. 16. Again. “Une *nature* qui *s’obstine* à rendre notre “existence *malheureuse*, nous ordonne d’en sortir; en “mourant nous remplissons un de ses décrets.” Samson, Eleazar, le Messie, and all the Christian martyrs, were, it seems, suicides! And yet, according to the same author, those are not suicides who expose themselves to the loss of life for the good of the community. In his *excuse* for *suicide* he is for once consistent: “Si l’homme “n’est libre dans aucun instant de sa vie, il l’est encore “bien moins dans l’acte qui la termine.” But what then becomes of the very term *suicide*?

Such are a very few only of the numberless inconsistencies this author falls into; but there is not one that is not common to all other writers upon the subject. I shall only take notice of one thing more at present, because it concerns those who think a system of strict necessity consistent with moral responsibility, and a state of future rewards and punishments. “S’il est “*juste*,” (it is God he is speaking of,) “comment croire “qu’il punisse des créatures qu’il a remplies de foi- “blesse?” Let it be remarked, that this is the observation of a rigid Fatalist. Our answer certainly is, that the wicked do not sin through any weakness. But how other *Fatalists* will answer it, we know not.

Page 161. note (5).

*The assassin can no more help the murder he commits, than the dagger can, which he employs.]* So says Mr. Godwin in one place: but in another he argues, that there would be no injustice in thrusting a drawn sword against the bosom of a friend, *except* that the necessary connection of causes and effects had taught us to foresee  
that

that the sword would wound. Are we to suppose then, that the dagger of a murderer is as capable of foreseeing this consequence, as the murderer himself? If not, the murderer may be *guilty of an injustice* in the act, which must constitute a most essential difference. But we shall be reminded, that Mr. Godwin's principle only is, that the murderer could no more *help the murder* he commits, than the dagger he employs, &c. because the motives that govern him are irresistible. But why has not the motive arising from the certain and necessary foresight of no wound being inflicted, except the dagger is so employed, as strong as any opposite motive? Is there no room in the scheme of the Fatalist for a *preference*? Certainly there is, for Mr. Godwin assures us so. "The doctrine of necessity," says he, "does not overturn the nature of things. Happiness and misery, wisdom and error, will still be distinct, and there will still be a connection between them. *Wherever* there is a *distinction*, there is ground for *preference* and desire, or, on the *contrary*, for neglect and aversion. If therefore by virtue we mean *that* principle, which asserts the *preference* of happiness and wisdom to misery and error, its reality will remain undiminished by the doctrine of necessity." *Pol. Just.* B. iv. ch. 8. Nay, preference in one place is made the very characteristic of virtue. "Virtue, considered as a personal quality, consists in the *disposition of mind*, and may be defined a desire to promote the benefit of intelligent beings in general; the quantity of virtue being as the quantity of desire. Now desire is another name for *preference*." B. iv. ch. 5.

In another place Mr. Godwin defines virtuous conduct to be a "conduct *proposing* to itself a certain end." The definition is good: but what shall we say to the argument that follows; that no otherwise than a knife has a capacity of cutting, has man a capacity of walking? So that a knife that cuts well, is a knife that proposes to itself to cut sharply!

Page 161. note (6).

*It is in vain to plead any distinction between rational and mechanical motives.] See upon this subject Dr. Priestley's Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism;*  
in

in which, not only the Doctor's own arguments in support of his system are given at length; but the answers and remarks of his friend Dr. Price. As Dr. Priestley was himself the editor of this work, we may naturally conclude that he thought he had the best of the argument: but we think it can scarce possibly appear so to any person else in the whole world. Dr. Price's answers and objections are invariably strong and pertinent, and many appear to us to be so conclusive, as to admit of no possible reply. Dr. Priestley would insist upon it, that the advocate for free will, in professing a freedom of action, professes to act without motive; and therefore can feel no remorse, nor even give offence. "For," says he, "what can a man have to blame himself for, when he acted *without motive*, and from no fixed principle, good or bad? And what occasion has he for pardon, who never meant to give offence?" But if a man refuses to be governed by a good motive, such inaction alone might amount to offence; much more if he resists it, or acts in direct opposition to it. What motive ought to be greater than the will of God? Yet, how many neglect, and how many even openly oppose his commandments? But consult his *Free Discussion*, pp. 307, 308. Dr. Price makes an admirable distinction of motives in his reply. According to him, motives are only certain reasons, on the view of which, or certain rules and perceptions, according to which, the mind determines *itself*. According to Dr. Priestley and other Fatalists, they are substances, which operate mechanically on the mind, and leave it no dominion over its determination. p. 342. See this point well argued in an *Essay on Liberty and Necessity*, by Philaretus, in answer to Toplady, pp. 90, 91. See also Clarke's excellent *Reply to Leibnitz*, as to his adopted comparison of a balance. Consult also the xxist chapter and the former part of the xxiiid chapter of the *Philocalia of Origen*; where a good account is given of the consistency of the freedom of man with God's over-ruling providence, and many passages of Scripture are reconciled.

Page 162. note (7).

*We are taught to look upon this only as a deception.]*  
Notwithstanding the eminent piety of Dr. Hartley, I  
cannot



cannot get over the reflection, which his system seems to cast on the Deity, in the distinction he makes between the popular and philosophical language upon the head of free-will; a distinction Dr. Priestley is very eager to insist upon. That the popular language may serve to convey to us just ideas of men's actions, as far as they *suppose* themselves to be free agents, we can readily admit; but that the same will serve to vindicate God's providence, we cannot allow. It would surely seem, that as by this scheme he would shew man to be only nominally, and not philosophically *free*, by the same scheme he represents the Deity as only nominally, and by no means philosophically, *just*, in the allotment of rewards and punishments.

Page 162. note (8.)

*No circumstances of character or disposition, &c.]* Character and disposition seem to be stubborn obstacles in the way of fatalism. Let them be regarded as they will in many cases, it would at least appear, that one necessity must be opposed to another. A motive incapable of producing its *proper* and *natural* effect, must be hindered by some impediment; and in moral concerns such impediment must often operate in the way of *resistance*. The following expressions of Mr. Hume (see his *Dissertation on the Passions*) seem surely to ascribe something to character quite independent of any necessary force of motives; for what should *necessarily* govern us more than the view of the greatest possible good, or the *sense* of any present and pressing uneasiness? His words are, "Men often act *knowingly* against their interest: it is not therefore the view of the greatest possible good, which always influences them. Men often *counteract* a *violent passion* in prosecution of their distant interests and designs: it is not therefore the present uneasiness alone, which determines them. In general we may observe, that both these principles operate on the will; and where they are contrary, that either of them prevails, according to the *general character and disposition* of the person." How far character or disposition may check or frustrate the operation of motives, we read in another place. "If I have no *vanity*, I take no delight in praise. If I

o

"be

“ be void of ambition, power gives me no enjoyment.  
 “ If I be not angry, the punishment of an adversary is  
 “ totally indifferent to me,” &c. *Essays*, vol. ii. 240.

Mr. Godwin, the pupil of Mr. Hume, or rather his echo upon this subject, says, the idea correspondent to the term *character* inevitably includes in it the *assumption* of necessary connection. This may be granted, without however excluding contingency. Mr. Godwin meets the objection, that “ in giving advice, or proposing arguments to a friend or neighbour, we make a reserve for a certain faculty of liberty he is *supposed to possess*, which may at last counteract the best directed projects,” by answering, that “ in regard to *matter* the same thing happens. When an experiment fails, which had many times before succeeded, the philosopher does not apprehend any liberty of choice in his retort and materials, but the counter-operation of some hidden cause.” But what is this to the purpose? We are not to be told, that matter is no agent; that a retort has no free choice: the question is, whether *man* is an *agent*, and whether *himself* may not be the counteracting cause? But why does Mr. Godwin refer us to matter at all, if matter and spirit be identical? If they are *not identical*, then spirit may be active, though matter cannot be so; and thus Mr. Godwin’s argument falls to the ground.

Mr. Hume considers it as a proof that all men have ever agreed in the doctrine of necessity, that a manufacturer reckons as surely upon the labour of his servants, as upon the tools which he employs. Assuredly; as far as he can be certain of the application of a given quantity of labour: but is he ever afraid of a combination among his tools, indicative of a *choice* and *option* whether they will work or no? Is he obliged to vary the obligations, by which his tools, at different times, are compelled to perform the task assigned them? Mr. Godwin also indeed asserts, that “ a labourer no more suspects that his employer will alter his mind, and not pay him his daily wages, than he suspects that his tools will *refuse* to perform those functions to-day, in which they were yesterday employed with success.” Whoever is wise enough to conclude it to be a physical impossibility, that the wages of a labourer should

should ever be withheld, may be wise enough to regard it as a physical possibility, that a workman's tools may *refuse* to do the work assigned to them : and those only who can believe both these things can admit, that there is any propriety in the comparison. Consult *Beattie on Truth*, Part II. ch. ii. iii. pp. 327, 328. in regard to such comparisons.

Whatever continues *free* in a case of compulsion, must surely be considered as confederate in a case of compliance. Rousseau has an applicable expression in the following sentiment: "Je suis *esclave* par mes vices, "et *libre* par mes remords." *Emile*, liv. iv. and Mallebranche asserts, that "we are *free* to deny our *consent*." B. i. ch. 2. which cannot, I think, be doubted; and surely Mr. Godwin intimates as much, when he advises, "Comply when the necessity of the case demands it; but *criticise* while you comply;" *Pol. Just.* b. iii. c. 6. 2d edit.; that is, withhold your consent, which you may do; and while you submit, exercise your judgment, which no coercion can reach. Nay, what shall we think of Mr. Godwin's opinion of the *freedom* of consent, when he says, in one place, "We are sick, and we die, because in a certain sense we *consent* to suffer these accidents." *Pol. Just.* 4to. edit. vol. ii. 519. "Discover the secret intrusted with you; I will not, for that is in my power. But I will throw thee into chains if thou dost not. Man! what dost thou say? Me wilt thou fetter? My feet thou mayst: but my *purpose* not Jupiter himself can overcome." Bishop Butler observes, that the most abandoned would wish to obtain their ends by innocent means, if they could. Does not this shew that they must give their *consent* to the *violation* of some moral principle within them, when they do wrong?

So far from our being subject to an universal necessity, both moral and physical, it would certainly appear, that there are some principles, which no necessity whatsoever can reach; except indeed the will and power of God, who could at once deprive us of existence: which is fit to be noticed, because Fatalists have often confounded free-agency with *independence*. To be able to do some things of ourselves can never imply, that we are able to do every thing. If God has

created any self-motive, self-determining agents, such creation can never make them self-existent. And yet even Voltaire could think it a wise argument in proof of necessity, that no man could change his own nature: "Si l'on étoit libre," says he, "quel est l'homme qui ne changeât son naturel? mais a-t-on jamais vu sur la terre un homme se donner seulement un goût?" The *Abbé Nonnette* well enough replies, Would one say a hunch-back was not free, because he could not mend his own shape? The Scripture says, "Thou canst not make one hair white or black;" and even this has been brought in proof of the doctrine of necessity, being the doctrine of Scripture: but the Scripture does not say we cannot rise from our bed, or use our hands and feet, without being compelled by an absolute necessity.

But it is not my design to go farther into this abstruse subject, than to notice the strange and inconsistent opinions, that have been held and avowed. As Lord Shaftesbury determined in regard to the speculations concerning identity, we had better, I think, take our free-agency "upon trust;" for though argument and speculation and debate may go on to eternity, conduct, in all probability, will be the same. [See *King's Origin of Evil*, pp. 200. and 247. note 93] Men will always act as though they were free; for I cannot think any thing can be more justly applied to the system of universal necessity, than what Mr. Godwin says of the doctrine of self-love; "It is not easy to conceive an hypothesis more singular than this. It is in direct opposition to experience, and what every man seems to know of himself: it undertakes to maintain, that we are under a delusion of the most extraordinary kind; and which would appear, to a person not trained in a philosophical system, of all others the most improbable." *Pol. Just.* b. iv. c. 10.

Page 165. note (9.)

None of the modern advocates of this doctrine allow us to draw such a conclusion.] Mr. Hume thinks the doctrine of necessity *absolutely essential* to the support of religion and morality. Dr. Priestley thinks it a far better foundation for *Ethics* than that of philosophical liberty.

We

We cannot doubt but the very pious Dr. Hartley had persuaded himself so. Godwin thinks, that to act independently of motives, that is, in *his* sense of the term, to act *freely*, is to have our conduct as independent of morality as of reason. Mr. Belsham's whole object, in his *Philosophy of the Mind*, is to reconcile the doctrines of *materialism*, *necessity*, and the selfish system of morals, with religion and virtue. Mr. B. insists upon it, that whatever is true should be disclosed. The Edinburgh Reviewers have ably exposed this maxim, and have shewn, that even if these doctrines could be supposed to be true, they might be of important detriment to society. Even the atheistical author of the *Système de la Nature* allows no indemnity to the perverse, under a system of necessity, if indeed his argument does not overthrow the whole of the doctrine itself: "Les loix ne sont faites que pour empêcher les hommes associés de se nuire : elles peuvent donc punir ceux qui troublent la société. Soit que ces associés soient des *agents nécessaires*, soit qu'ils agissent librement ; il leur suffit de sçavoir que ces *agents* peuvent être *modifiés*." Ch. xii. Part. I.

But the best account to be given of the state of the question, as applicable either to our present conduct or future prospects, is to be found in the celebrated work of the learned Bishop Butler. Having shewn by many clear and indisputable arguments, that God at present governs the world by the method of rewards and punishments, in the *natural* consequences of virtue and vice, he draws these two conclusions: "If it be incredible, that *necessary* agents should be so rewarded and punished in the natural consequences of their actions, then men are *not* necessary, but free ; since it is matter of fact, that they are thus rewarded and punished. But if, on the contrary, (which is the supposition we have been arguing upon,) it be insisted, that men are *necessary* agents, then there is nothing incredible in the farther supposition of *necessary* agents being thus rewarded and punished ; since we ourselves are thus dealt with."

All speculations upon the subject therefore are really unnecessary ; since, if we are free, and know ourselves to be so, we must believe that we are responsible both

to God and to man for the whole of our conduct and our actions, and that rewards and punishments await us accordingly both here and hereafter. But if we can for an instant suppose ourselves necessary beings, then we are assured by Fatalists themselves, that it does not set us free from the obligations of morality with respect to this life; and by the very learned Bishop Butler, that it neither destroys the proof of a moral governor, nor contradicts our being in a state of religion, with respect to God, or with respect to a life to come. See his *Analogy*, Part I. ch. vi.

Page 168. note (10).

*Système de la Nature*, Part I. ch. xii. I have endeavoured to keep to the exact terms the Author himself uses. I have rendered "peines" by our English expression of *pains* and *penalties*, because they are both included in the French term; and the author unquestionably had a view to legal *punishments*, as well as coercion; and the whole is avowedly in vindication of *penal* laws. "Se trouve-t-il des hommes assez mal constitués pour résister ou pour être insensibles aux motifs qui agissent sur tous les autres, ils ne sont point propres à vivre en société, ils contrarieroiént le but de l'association, ils en seroient les ennemis, ils mettroient obstacle à sa tendance, et leurs volontés rebelles et insociables, n'ayant pu être modifiées convenablement aux intérêts de leurs concitoyens, ceux-ci se réunissent contre leurs ennemis; et la loi, qui est l'expression de la volonté générale, inflige des peines à ces êtres, sur qui les motifs qu'on leur avoit présentés n'ont point les effets que l'on pouvoit en attendre." The author makes no objection whatever to the *penal* laws of a state; indeed he extends them far beyond what ever entered yet into the mind of the most sanguinary legislator; for, upon his system, madmen, and ideots, and children are as proper subjects of the pains and penalties of the law, as the wicked and perverse: for his definition of a punishable crime is in fact, "toute action nuisible, de quelque source qu'elle soit partie;" and certainly, at all events, none are so inaccessible to ordinary motives, as fools, and madmen, and children. And yet the same writer can argue against the *Theistical Fatalist*

*talist* in the following strong terms. “Est-il rien de plus  
 “inconséquent que les idées de quelques Théistes, qui  
 “nient la liberté de l’homme, et qui cependant s’ob-  
 “stinent à parler d’un Dieu vengeur et rémunérateur ?  
 “comment un Dieu juste peut-il punir des actions né-  
 “cessaires ?” Ch. vii. Part II.

Page 170. note (II).

Dr. Priestley is not the first Unitarian who has disputed the immateriality of the human soul; (see *Edwards’s Preservative against Socinianism*, Part IV. p. 38.) but perhaps he is the first who has so openly avowed his motives for so doing. He acknowledges that it proceeded from an apprehension, that the doctrine of “a separate soul had been the foundation of what appeared to him the very grossest corruptions of Christianity, and of that Antichristianism which began to work in the Apostles’ times, and extended itself so dreadfully afterwards;” “I mean,” says he, “the Oriental philosophy of the pre-existence of souls, which drew after it the *pre-existence* and *divinity* of Christ, &c. Among these also I rank the doctrine of *atonement* for the sins of men by the sufferings and death of Christ.” See the *Introduction to his Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism*, in a correspondence between Drs. Priestley and Price. At pp. 240, 241, he says further, “In short, it is my firm persuasion, that the *three* doctrines of *materialism*, of that which is commonly called *Socinianism*, and of *philosophical necessity*, are equally parts of one system, being equally founded on just observations of nature, and fair deductions from the Scriptures.” I have already had occasion to notice this publication; see note 6. Dr. Price’s arguments are unanswerable in many instances; but it is particularly curious, that in his objections he has almost forced Dr. Priestley into a voluntary illustration of the Trinity; that is, in fact, into an acknowledgment of the *reasonableness* of the doctrine, contrary to his own principles: for in answer to Dr. Price’s objection, “would not *any number* of living bodies be *one* soul, *one* sentient principle, supposing their organization the same?” Dr. P. replies, “I answer, that different systems of matter, organized exactly alike,  
 “must

“ must make different beings, who would *feel* and “ *think* exactly alike in the same circumstances. Their “ minds therefore would be *exactly similar*, but *numerically different*.” Surely this is at least coming very near to an unity of volition and operation with a distinction of persons. See *Free Discussion*, p. 78.

Page 171. note (12).

*Must incline us to set but small value on such vain speculations.*] What are we to think of the advances men have made in *metaphysics*, when we consider the *present* state of the question concerning matter itself: a question of no small importance, when it is made to include the nature of the human soul. Dr. Priestley attributed motion to matter. His friend Dr. Price positively denied it. Diderot, in his *Système de la Nature*, says, “ le “ mouvement *ne peut être qu’une propriété de la matière*.” Rousseau says, “ Mon esprit refuse tout acquiescement à l’idée de la matière non-organisée se mouvant d’elle-même, ou produisant quelque action.” *Emile*. Dr. Darwin, though he afterwards seems to desert his own principles, says, in the outset of his *Zoonomia*, “ The whole of nature may be said to consist of “ two essences or substances; spirit and matter. The “ former has power to commence or produce, the latter “ to receive or communicate motion.” According to one discovery in France, the mind is thought to consist of a fine species of *crystals*! See a paper by *La Méthérie* in the *Journal de Physique*. At all events, Metaphysicians are by no means yet agreed as to the possibility or impossibility of matter’s thinking. See *Home’s Essays*, 3d edit. p. 286,



---

## S E R M O N V.

---

JEREMIAH vi. 16.

*Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.*

**W**HENEVER we perceive a disposition in the world to place a more than usual confidence in the powers of Reason, we may well expect not to be indulged in any attachment or adherence to old opinions. Reason, in such a case, becomes a faculty altogether *modern*. It is only the wit and wisdom of the present day, that is ever dignified with the title; nor is the title even then bestowed on the sober talent of enquiry and investigation, so much as on the adventurous propensity to invention and discovery, reformation and change. The former process is too slow, and has too much of submission and accommodation

dation in it : the latter is sure to be popular for the time ; for opposition, merely as such, is grateful to many minds, and novelty always has its charms.

It is upon this principle that so much ill will has been expressed of late to every thing taught and inculcated upon a footing of *permanence*, as I had occasion to notice in my second Discourse ; and that we have been so rudely called upon to abandon our laws and our statutes, our creeds and our catechisms, to make way for the superior system of *perfectibility* ( <sup>1</sup> ) ; which, in the jargon of the times, we have been told, is “ the only salubrious element of mind <sup>a</sup> : ” that is, as I conceive, ( if it is possible to give any meaning to so strange an expression, ) we must suffer ourselves to be persuaded, that since knowledge in general seems to be progressive, and always capable of further advancement, it is not wise to suppose, that we have hitherto attained to any degree of perfection or certainty, even on points the most important. And thus religion and morality must be left to take their chance among

<sup>a</sup> Godwin, *Pol. Just.* vol. ii. 397. 4to. edit.

other things, which the superior wisdom of the times is to new-model and improve.

But this cannot be the case, if either of them is founded on Revelation, or can be supposed to be so ; and therefore it is of the utmost importance to us to be assured, that they *have* such a foundation ; that there certainly exists such a Revelation ; that it has some such marks of authenticity, as the Infidel cannot controvert ; and that, if we have not such a Revelation in the holy Scriptures, (a Revelation of God's will and design in the *first creation of man*,) so far from having any reason to expect greater improvements in the way of morality and religion, we have the utmost assurance which the nature of things can supply, that nothing more certain or satisfactory is to be expected, either from God or man.

That it is exceedingly worth our while, independent of all other considerations, to examine into the truth of the Jewish and Christian Revelations, I have already endeavoured to shew, by an examination of some of those points, which Reason *cannot* decide for us, but which those Two Revelations

tions certainly do <sup>b</sup>. Reason can never inform us whence we came, or what is to become of us (<sup>2</sup>); who placed us here, nor for what end, nor what was the origin of the globe we dwell on. Of these things the Scriptures inform us. Reason can never tell us when the world began, though its eternity is incomprehensible, and inconsistent with our most common notions of God's attributes. This the Scriptures decide for us. Our reason and our conscience will both inform us, that we are wicked and corrupt; but that God cannot be considered as the immediate author of such wickedness and corruption. These difficulties the Scriptures will reconcile for us. Reason can never tell us, how these things are to end; how we are to be set free from the evils that now beset us; how the moral government of God is finally to be vindicated. All these things also the Scriptures amply disclose to us.

Such information as the above, then, being to be derived solely from the Scriptures, as the sacred and inspired records of God's

<sup>b</sup> Vid. *Abbadie de la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne*, sect. iii. ch. 3.

dealings with mankind from the first beginning of things, and of his purpose and design in the creation both of the earth and of man; it would be the utmost folly to suffer ourselves to be deprived of such important information, by any objections that fall short of *positive contradiction*.

I cannot help regarding it as a point entirely settled, that nothing amounting to *positive contradiction* can possibly be alleged against the peculiar *credentials* of the Jewish and Christian Revelations, such as *prophecy* and *miracles* (<sup>3</sup>). Men may dispute the application of particular prophecies, or the testimony concerning particular miracles; but that prophecy or miracles are in themselves impossible, or have not been brought into the system of God's providential government of the world, as the Jewish and Christian records attest, is wholly incapable of proof. Those who have endeavoured to invalidate their authority, by pretending that the former cannot be kept free from the reach of chance; or that no evidence can be sufficient to certify us of the truth of the latter, have not in any manner proved their points. If *one* prophecy should not have every requisite insisted

insisted on by a late celebrated writer, as sufficient to prove it to be above the reach of human conjecture, or the contingencies of common events ; yet the accumulation and agreement of many successive prophecies certainly may : a case by no means properly considered by the writer alluded to<sup>c</sup>. And as to the possibility of a sufficient evidence of miracles, the very writer who has put himself most forward to deny it, has by an extraordinary oversight expressly admitted it, in contradiction to his own arguments ; as has been shewn in the clearest and fullest manner<sup>d</sup>. But *positive contradictions* having been fought for, where indeed it was most reasonable to look for them, in the historical records of the world, and in the body of the earth itself, I shall proceed, according to the plan I set out with, to take a view of the present state of *history* and *physics*, as far as they may be thought to affect the authenticity of the Scriptures. And first, in regard to the historical records of the world.

They who pretend to have the most ex-

<sup>c</sup> Rousseau.

<sup>d</sup> See *Leland's Answer to Hume, and Campbell on Miracles.*

alted ideas of God's majesty, are too apt to regard every thing less than infinite as unworthy of his notice, and as inferring some limitation of his will or his power. That an eternal Being should be represented as doing any thing *in time*, is thought a derogation from his majesty ; and therefore the Mosaic cosmogony is objected to, not only in respect to the periodical operations into which it is divided, but for the small antiquity it seems to assign to our globe or system. As to the particular date, be it what it will, it has been well observed, in reply to those who are willing to grant the world not to be eternal, that if it ever had a beginning, it must at one time or other have been just as old as we account it to be now ; and such objections would have been just as valid *then*, as far as concerns the will and design of God. But in regard to the fact itself, of the new creation or arrangement of any world or system, modern discoveries would rather seem to justify such an hypothesis. For though we can never speak with too much diffidence upon such subjects, yet I cannot forbear to remark, that the loss of some stars noticed in ancient catalogues, as well as the

ap-

appearance of new ones, have led some very eminent and pious astronomers to the conjecture, that, in the course of God's providential government of the universe, some systems are from time to time dissolved, and others called into being; and that things may continue so till the period fixed for the final consummation of all things (<sup>4</sup>).

Such has been lately the conjecture of wise and good men; but we must not regard it as more than a conjecture; and I have no other view in mentioning it, than to shew, that it is not unreasonable to suppose, independently of the light of Revelation, that the very period of the commencement of our system, particularly of the globe we dwell on, *may be assigned, and has been recorded*: that it may be regarded as of a *determinate* age, and its date ascertained, by enquiry into the history of man, and the origin, course, and progress of arts and sciences. For as there can be no doubt, that the chief purpose of the creation of this globe must have been to make it the seat of rational, social, and intelligent beings, the newness of such arts and sciences, as are not essential to man as such, must be a sensible



ſible proof of the low antiquity of this habitable world. But this argument has been ſo often reſorted to, that I need not dwell on it longer, than to remark generally, that we are certainly able to trace many of the moſt important diſcoveries, and moſt neceſſary arts, to a certain point : to ſuch a ſtate of ru<sup>d</sup>eneſs and imperfection, that is, as may at once ſerve to ſhew, that their improvement has been gradual, and that their firſt invention cannot have been very diſtant and remote (<sup>5</sup>).

But we ought always to remember, that, when once we give up the Moſaic æra of the creation of man, as fabulous, we have comparatively an *eternity* before us (<sup>6</sup>). The world *may* be ten years, or ten thouſand, or ten thouſand times ten thouſand years older. A ſmall difference will not ſuit the purpoſes of thoſe, who would inſiſt upon the low antiquity of the globe being incompatible with the preſent appearances of things ; and to aſſign any very high antiquity at pleaſure will ſerve them no better. A few centuries will make no difference in regard to the former objection, and many will only involve them again in doubts as to the late inven-

tion of arts and sciences, and the loss of all monumental records.

But the most remarkable circumstance of all, and that on which I chiefly propose to insist at present, is the want of all evidence *positively contradictory* to the æra assigned by the Scriptures. There can be no doubt as to the great antiquity of the book of *Genesis*. There is no reasonable doubt to be entertained of its being written and composed by Moses<sup>e</sup>: we have no difficulty in determining the part of the world in which it was written; and we may, by reference to other existing annals of the world, and other histories of mankind, be morally certain of many of the circumstances, under which it must have been written, supposing it to be a merely *human* composition. What knowledge Moses might have had of the world in general, it is neither possible nor necessary to conjecture; but what he could *not* have known of the world, is almost capable of demonstration<sup>f</sup>. It would be next

<sup>e</sup> See *Gray on the Old Testament*.

<sup>f</sup> How ignorant the early Pagan historians were of the situation, affairs, and concerns of other countries, besides their own, may be seen in *Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity*, vol. i.

to an absurdity to suppose that he could have had any knowledge of the great continent of America; of the western parts of Europe; of much of Asia, and much of Africa. Of Egypt, Phœnicia, and Chaldæa, we may grant that he knew as much as could be known; but it is remarkable, that these very countries (till very lately, that<sup>a</sup> their annals came to be better understood) were supposed to have laid claim to an antiquity totally irreconcilable with the Mosaic æra of the creation. Had the author of the book of Genesis then had no determinate period in view, it is reasonable to suppose, that, for the credit of his history, he would either have positively contradicted these accounts, or minutely conformed himself to them. But instead of this, while he even ascribes to the Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Midianites, and Canaanites, who were enemies and objects of aversion to his countrymen, a higher antiquity than to the Israelites<sup>s</sup>; yet, regardless of all the extravagances the world has since been amused

p. 95. See also *Wotton's and Baker's Reflections on Learning*, for the knowledge the ancients had of geography.

<sup>s</sup> See *Jamieson on the Use of Sacred History*, 1st Disquisition, prefixed.

with, he proceeds in a narration, the most artless and the most regular, to deduce the whole race of mankind from one common ancestor ; to whose creation he assigns a particular æra, as well as to the earth itself, their intended habitation and dominion. Certainly, to have written at a particular period ; to have written and published such an account before one half, or even one fourth part of the world was known, or had been traversed ; and to have done this in the very midst of nations laying claim to an antiquity, far exceeding the æra fixed on, must have been as bold an imposture as could well have been attempted (7).

But it is now, as nearly as can be, upon the lowest computation, three thousand years since this account was written ; in which time the globe has been gradually explored, and every enquiry made, that could be made, into the history and antiquities of the several nations into which it is divided. That much is lost that might aid such enquiries, it would be vain to deny ; but that much remains to be discovered, it is not reasonable to suppose. Of what is lost, fragments of great importance have been preserved ; and to  
many,

many, such references are subsisting, as may serve to inform us of the general nature of their evidence. Of what remains to be discovered perhaps we have little or nothing to expect but from the East. The literary stores of Asia, to say the most of them, are now perhaps only exploring—but already we know much—much that is without doubt exceedingly corroborative of the Scripture history of the earth and of man. I do not mean to take up your time with any examination of the correspondences particularly to be discovered, between the Oriental mythologies and the Mosaic account of the early ages of the world ; nor is it my intention to trace such resemblances through the very curious, but too often obscure, mazes of etymology. If all that can *reasonably* be done in *this way* has not yet been done <sup>(8)</sup>, yet certainly such investigations have been pursued far enough to enable us to draw this general conclusion; that even if the Hindu Scriptures could be proved to be older than the Mosaic writings, yet as Moses might certainly have written, all that he *has* written of the history of the first generations of men, from *tradition*, the many correspondences and

resemblances that have been traced in the Hebrew and Hindu Scriptures, as well as in many profane histories, can only tend to shew that they were all equally derived from *one common source*<sup>h</sup>. Moses does not tell us himself, that his is the oldest record of these traditions: but as far as it is in agreement with other histories, it requires only common sense to distinguish it as the most authentic; and his inspiration as a Prophet is totally a distinct consideration.

There are many things connected with the history of man, of which we must now be contented for ever to remain ignorant; and yet they have been considered as of no small importance in such investigations as those I am treating of; such, for instance, as the origin of languages. It has been thought that, had the world begun, as we suppose it to have begun, with a first pair, all languages now existing might be traced to one parent stock; and were this clearly practicable, it might certainly be expected to throw

<sup>h</sup> See this discussed in the 16th vol. of the *British Critic*, pp. 148, 149, 150, in answer to the strange advertisement prefixed to the 5th vol. of the *Asiatic Researches*, which is surely an interpolation.

much light on the origin of nations. But though some have thought this possible (<sup>9</sup>), and it must unquestionably be granted that very striking resemblances have been traced between the different tongues, idioms, and dialects of nations the most remote; yet, as a question which concerns the Scriptures, we must remember, that if the Scriptures are true, we read of a confusion of tongues<sup>i</sup> for wise purposes; to further the dispersion of families, and for the discomfiture of an impious project: a confusion which would infer, if not a separation into a multiplicity of distinct tongues, yet at least a separation of one language into a great variety of dialects<sup>k</sup>; a variety which time, and the further separation of tribes and nations, the later invention and adoption of different alphabets to express the several forms of speech<sup>l</sup>, and many other circumstances, must have continually increased; so as to have long rendered such an enquiry too precarious to be depended on. It would be

<sup>i</sup> See *Hartley on Man*, prop. cxxiii, p. 373. edit. 1791, and *Stackhouse's History of the Bible*.

<sup>k</sup> See *Bryant's Mythology*.

<sup>l</sup> See *Jackson's Chronological Antiquities*.

much more to our purpose to endeavour to inform ourselves how the connection between the different races of people can be traced ; and though this also must, in the nature of things, be now liable to many uncertainties, yet there seems to be great reason for our reliance on the general result of those curious and laborious enquiries, for which we are indebted to that very learned and indefatigable Orientalist, whose premature loss, not this place only, nor yet only the nation, but the world at large has had such great occasion to deplore ; namely, that the world *appears*, upon the most diligent enquiry that can be made into the subject, to have been peopled by *three* great branches proceeding from *one* stock. We know that this very curious investigation has been pursued through the four *media*, of their languages and letters ; their philosophy ; the actual remains of their sculpture and architecture ; and lastly, the written memorials of their arts and sciences <sup>m</sup>.

It cannot be expected that I should do

<sup>m</sup> See *Lord Teignmouth's Life of Sir William Jones*, and the several Anniversary Discourses and other papers of Sir William, published in the *Asiatic Researches*, and in his *Works*.



more at present than refer to the very curious discourses and disquisitions, whence we derive this information : but I cannot help adding this remark, that if we have not now every document we might have had upon the subject, we have such a *gradation* of documents, as may well deter us from all possible expectation of receiving any further information, truly historical, of the more remote ages of the world. The Scripture account is at once the shortest and most regular, indeed the only regular one. What is at all intelligible in other accounts is easily reducible to this ; what is not intelligible has been proved to be in many respects so clearly artificial, as to take it entirely out of the line of history.

But, in order to judge properly of the present state of our knowledge in regard to the history of man, it will be fit to take a short but comprehensive view of the Hindu chronology, as the last that has come before us for examination, and in which there have occurred as great *appearances* of antiquity as in any, perhaps, that has ever been discovered since the first publication of the Genesis of Moses. Any exact conformity with the

the Hebrew records, any perfect synchronisms, it would be vain and absurd to expect; and whatever traces may be found of resemblance in the historical records of the Hebrews and Hindus, it is most certain that one of the two has deviated so much from the plain truth, and run so far into the labyrinth of poetical imagery, fable, and allegory, as to afford us but little information truly historical, upon which we may rely.

The celebrated *Astronomical Tables* of the Hindus, however, have been supposed to supply us with *data* of much more certainty<sup>(10)</sup>; and it cannot be denied that they must for ever excite our admiration and surprise. To say the least of them, they evince such a knowledge of the celestial phænomena, that their accuracy and precision in many respects are exceedingly extraordinary. It has been supposed capable of proof by very eminent men, that the calculations *must have been derived from actual observation*; and if so, they carry us so far back as naturally to occasion no small surprise, not only in regard to the advanced state of that curious science in ages so remote, but as we consider the comparative want of instruments for the purpose of observation. It  
has

has been asserted indeed since, that wrong dates have undoubtedly been assigned to these Tables; and, besides other strong objections, very curious calculations have been made, to shew that they need not, at all events, be indispensably referred to actual observation; since it was possible to assume such epochs as the Tables assign, without the risk of much perceptible variation<sup>n</sup>. Both these circumstances are undoubtedly of the very first importance, if we chose to insist upon them: but I shall rather confine myself to the general result of the case, supposing every thing to be granted that is required of us, in regard to the great antiquity of these Tables.

It is well known that the Hindu chronology is principally divided into *four ages*, all of an extravagant length; the largest period extending to the immense amount of nearly *two millions* of years. I have already observed, that if we once quit the Mosaic æra, we have comparatively an eternity before us. For if that account is not true, we shall not, I think, be inclined to trust to any Pagan mythology,

<sup>n</sup> See *Mr. Bentley on the Surya Siddhanta* in the 6th vol. of the *Asiatic Researches*.

but shall be contented to acknowledge, that we are without any *certain* account whatever of the *beginning of things*. Now in the Hindu chronology we already have a computation of only one period of nearly two millions of years; and we have nothing, *in the mere nature of things*, to set against the *possibility* of such a duration of our system and of mankind, even without any reduction of those years to lunar or diurnal revolutions. The second or third ages are of more than *one million of years*; and the fourth or present age is, by their accounts, to last upwards of four hundred thousand years.

Now it is certainly very remarkable, that, though time is much wanted to account in any manner for such a progress in the science of astronomy, as should enable us to refer the Hindu Tables to the æra they point to; yet those who have examined them with the greatest attention, and have expressed the greatest confidence in their antiquity, have not been able to discover any other *proper* monumental or historical records, to confirm such a state of things; nor (supposing them actually the fruit of observation) do they yet serve to carry us back further, than to such  
a period

a period as might well be brought into agreement with the Scripture chronology. I do not say into exact agreement, nor is the agreement to be traced directly; but yet into a degree of conformity not at all to be expected, if the world is either so old as the Hindu records pretend, or even at all older than the Mosaic æra of the creation, according to the largest Scriptural computation extant; I mean the computation of the Septuagint. According to this computation, the commencement of the fourth Hindu age, in which we are supposed to be at present, does not carry us beyond the æra of the deluge<sup>o</sup>: and as every Indian age is supposed to be terminated by a deluge, all this part of their chronology and history is strictly *postdiluvian*. The two first ages are, by those most attentive to the subject, entirely set aside, as fabulous; therefore we have only the two last ages for the history of man, amounting, according to the Hindu compu-

<sup>o</sup> The æra of the flood, according to common copies of the LXX. is 3028 before Christ; according to Grabe's Septuagint, 3246; according to Perron, 3617. M. Bailly fixes the commencement of the 4th Hindu age at 3102.

tation, to eight hundred and fixty-four thousand years, added to what is expired of the current age. But as the former has been held by one very eminent writer<sup>P</sup> to have consisted only of lunar years, or years of months, upon reduction they are brought down to two thousand four hundred solar years; which added to three thousand one hundred and two, the years supposed to have elapsed from the commencement of the fourth age to the Christian æra, make in all five thousand five hundred and two years, leaving a difference of only six years between this account and one computation of the Seventy<sup>Q</sup>.

It is not possible in a discourse from the pulpit to go further into such calculations: but such a conformity in accounts apparently so contradictory is too striking and remarkable to be entirely passed over; more especially as it would *seem* to be the winding up

<sup>P</sup> M. Bailly. See note 9.

<sup>Q</sup> The computation of the Constantinopolitans and Grabe's Septuagint, of the years from the creation to the birth of Christ, amounts to 5508 years, 3 months. There are two accounts extant, which come still nearer; that of Cedrenus in Chevreau, which is 5506; and that of Julius Africanus, Theophanes, Eutychius, &c. which is 5500.

of all chronological accounts of the world. It is no long time since the Chaldæan, Phœnician, Ægyptian, and even Grecian antiquities, were thought to be *quite irreconcilable* to the holy Scriptures ; and I ought to add to these, the Chinese annals, which, though so much more recently made known to the world, have by some been supposed to be the most ancient and most accurate accounts of all. The very learned author of the *Origines Sacræ* conjectured, from the particular æra of the publication of the Egyptian and Chaldæan dynasties, that they were expressly designed to invalidate the authority of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament<sup>r</sup>: but it has since been discovered that both accounts are capable of being brought to agree, if not with the Hebrew, which has been strongly insisted upon, yet very nearly with the Greek chronology of Scripture, by a judicious separation of all that is clearly fabulous and artificial, and such a reduction of diurnal and lunar to solar years, as is not only reasonable, but expressly authorised by the testimony of very anci-

<sup>r</sup> See also *Wotton's Reflections on Learning*, ch. ix. 2d edit.

ent authors; of the propriety and justice of which we cannot possibly doubt, from many instances that might be adduced of different accounts being thus brought to a perfect agreement. This is supposed to be the case, very particularly, with the separate accounts given by Callisthenes and Epigenes of the Chaldæan observations, which according to the latter amounted to the amazing sum of seven hundred and twenty thousand years<sup>s</sup>; but according to the former to

\* *Plin. Nat. Hist.* vii. c. 56. There can be no doubt of the accidental omission of “*millia*,” in this and the following passage of Pliny, and that the numbers should be 720,000, and 480,000, that is so many years of days. Cicero indeed makes the Chaldæan records amount to only 470,000; “*ccccclxx millia annorum.*” *de Divinat.* l. i. 19; Diodorus Siculus to *ccccclxxiii* thousand, lib. ii. Pliny’s reference is for the purpose of shewing that the use of letters had been, as he says, *eternal*. Now as the Chaldæans had a computation of at the least 470,000 years, according to Cicero; it must probably have been to *such* computations that Pliny meant to refer. Both Mr. Bryant and the President Goguet cite Pliny, without noticing the inconsistency and probable omission; and the latter even makes use of the authority of Epigenes against the assumed antiquity of the Chaldæans. But I think Mr. Jackson has clearly shewn that the reading in Pliny is erroneous. See his *Chronological Antiquities*, vol. i. 218. For the reckoning of Callisthenes, see Simplicius, *Comment. in Aristot. de Cælo*, lib. ii.

only



only nineteen hundred and three. Now seven hundred and twenty thousand days make, as nearly as can be, nineteen hundred and seventy-one years : and as Epigenes is thought to have been sixty-eight years posterior to Callisthenes, the accounts may be said to agree exactly.

It can scarcely by any reasonable man be thought, that we are not going upon sure grounds in such calculations of the age of the world, when the same method of computation serves to bring into agreement, (much more nearly than could be expected) not only the ancient Phœnician, Egyptian, Chaldæan and Hebrew accounts, but the more recently discovered annals of China and India ! I shall not pretend to discuss the very curious but intricate question relative to the differences subsisting between the Hebrew and Greek chronology of the Scriptures ; very learned men having bestowed extraordinary attention on the subject<sup>t</sup>, without producing on either side that universal consent which might have been ex-

<sup>t</sup> See note 9.

pected from their very interesting and laborious undertakings. Nor do I conceive it to be of any material consequence; because though the Hindu chronology in *this particular instance* has been thought more conformable to the Greek than to the Hebrew computation, yet, so far as it exceeds the latter, it depends on circumstances which only become probable through their supposed agreement with the reckoning of Josephus and the Seventy. I think it is enough for us to know, and with that I shall conclude, that, so far from any historical evidence *positively contradictory* to the Mosaic æras of the creation and deluge, having been discovered, even now that the whole globe has been traversed, and much new light thrown upon the subject, what has most recently come to our knowledge, so far as it can be thought to have *any* foundation in truth, seems peculiarly capable of being brought to agree with all the other annals of the world: that all the chronological tables, which have any proper historical records at all to support them, are strictly *postdiluvian*, while such as seem

to

to carry us back to a former state of the globe are either manifestly and indisputably fabulous, or, however corrupted in numerous instances, contain sufficient marks of being all derived alike from divine revelation, or patriarchal tradition.



## NOTES TO SERMON V.

---

Page 202. note (1).

*To abandon our laws and our statutes, &c. to make way for the superior system of perfectibility.]*

“ Law tends, no less than creeds, and catechisms, and tests, to fix the human mind in a stagnant condition, and to substitute a principle of *permanence* in the room of that *unceasing perfectibility*, which is the only salubrious element of mind.” *Pol. Just.* vol. ii. 397.

Nothing can be more difficult than to satisfy the demands of Deists and Infidels. An immutable and permanent system, it seems, is in no manner admissible; and yet there is no objection to the Christian religion more frequently or more confidently insisted on, than its want of universality, its late appearance, and its *gradual* propagation. This was the chief argument of Mr. Blount's famous book, which he chose to call *The Oracles of Reason*. He was ably answered, as is well known, by Dr. Leland, and by Dr. Clarke, in his *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*. Such a scheme of Revelation has also often been shewn to be analogous to the ordinary dispensations of God's providence, particularly by Bishop Butler, in his celebrated work, and by Dr. Leland and Bishop Conybeare, in their *Answers to Tindal's Christianity as old as the Creation*. See also *Law's Theory of Religion*, with the references, p. 5. and *Mr. Bryant on the Authenticity of the Scriptures*.

If we required any *new* case of analogy, perhaps a stronger could not be found, than in the favourite scheme of *perfectibility*, which modern Deists make such a stir about; for perfection here, as a gift of God, would, no doubt, have been comparatively as acceptable to man,

as salvation hereafter ; especially such a state of perfection as *has been held to be attainable* ; namely, the universal prevalence of *omnipotent truth*, and the entire subjection of *matter to mind* : so that the soul shall be free from all error and weakness, and the body released from the apprehension, and even from the stroke of death. [Godwin] For the Creator, who first placed us in this state of *never-ceasing* perfectibility, could assuredly as easily have rendered us invulnerable, perfect, and immortal at once. Rousseau, upon the general principle of perfectibility, goes so far as to suggest the possibility that many "*Animaux antropoformes*," such as "*les orang-outans, pongos, enjokos, beggos, man-drilles*," &c. may yet turn out to be "*véritables hommes*," when proper opportunities occur for them, "*développer leurs facultés*." *Ouvrages*, tom. i. p. 152. But to be serious.

If the system of perfectibility so much talked of is at all founded in fact, it should certainly tend to silence all objections against Revelation on the score of its present *apparent* want of universality, its gradual progress, and the state of trial and probation, in which it places us. For not only has Christianity, in its introduction and establishment, been thus conformable to all that we can collect of God's providence from a view of nature ; but it happens to be besides, in itself, the most glorious scheme of perfectibility that ever was proposed to the world.

"There is not, in my opinion," says the immortal Addison, "a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion, than this of the *perpetual progress*, which the soul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength ; to consider, that she is to shine for ever with new accessions of glory, and brighten to all eternity ; that she will be still adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge, carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition, which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect pleasing to God himself, to see his creation for ever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him, by greater degrees of resemblance. Methinks  
"this

“this single consideration of the *progress of a finite spirit to perfection*, will be sufficient to extinguish all envy in inferior natures, and all contempt in superior. The cherubim, which now appears as a God to a human soul, knows very well, that the period will come about in eternity, when the human soul shall be as perfect as he himself now is: nay, when she shall look down upon that degree of perfection, as much as she now falls short of it,” &c. *Spectator*, No. III. See also an excellent Discourse by *Seed*, in the 2d vol. of his *Posthumous Works*, on the *Christian life being a progressive state*; and compare Philippians iii. 12, 13, 14.

What a picture of the *perfectibility of man* is this, compared with the strange notions and fanciful conceits of many of our modern Deists! *This system of perfectibility* has indeed GOD for its author; and for its *object*, not the worldly attainments of this life only, but the delights of heaven, and the glories of an eternity! Every system of perfectibility however *must* have something *permanent*, either for its object or its foundation. Mr. Godwin himself depends on “the *understanding growing every day sounder and stronger*;” not from its pursuit of a phantom, but “by *perpetual communication with truth*.” The great question between us still therefore seems to be, “What is *truth*?” or rather, What is *the truth*, and where is it to be found? If in any instance it is clearly and amply made known to us, we cannot, according to Mr. Godwin’s own argument, have too constant or too steady a communication with it, for the very purposes of perfectibility. Now it is undeniable, that some truths are so known, as that we may act upon them with the greatest certainty, as the principles of Geometry, &c. Is it the same then with any religious and moral truths? or are these left dependent, and for ever so, on the casual discoveries and deductions of human Reason? Those who make *truth* the only rule of action, independent of the *revealed will* of God, must certainly conclude the latter to be the case; and how uncertain a rule this must be, may be well judged, from the deductions which the learned Wollaston was himself obliged to make from his general proposition, that “Truth is dis-

“coverable by Reason.” “I would have it minded,” says he, “that I do not say, men may not by virtue of their freedom break off their meditations and enquiries prematurely, before they have taken a sufficient survey of things; that they may not be prepossessed with inveterate errors, biased by interest, or carried violently down with the stream of a sect or fashion, or dazzled by some darling notion or bright name; that they may not be unprovided of a competent stock of *præcognita* and preparative knowledge; that (among other things) they may not be ignorant of the very nature of reasoning, and what it is that gives sinews to an inference, and makes it just; that they may not want philosophy, history, or other learning requisite to the understanding and stating the question truly; that they may not have the confidence to pretend to abilities, which they have not, and boldly to judge of things, as if they were qualified, when they are not; that many understandings may not be naturally gross, good heads often indisposed, and the ablest judges sometimes overseen through inadvertency or haste: I say none of these things; the contrary I confess is manifest.” *Religion of Nature*, sect. iii. 9.

It is true indeed, that he makes a distinction between *Reason* and *right Reason*: a distinction that should always be carefully attended to; but which is continually overlooked. But from this account it would certainly appear, first, as the learned author himself adds, that “not every truth is discoverable by Reason;” and secondly, that but few of those that are discoverable are likely to be duly considered and appreciated, amidst such a variety of hindrances, and such a multiplicity of disqualifications.

The main difference between the Deists and Christians, in regard to the great and weighty truths of religion and morality, is, that the former still think they are only discoverable in the way of speculation; the latter suppose, that all that is necessary to be known *all concerning truths*, as Bishop Pearson styles them, *has been* discovered to us, by express declarations of God’s will, in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Creeds and catechisms then, which set forth these fundamental truths,  
are



are no more to be condemned, or to be regarded as adverse to man's perfectibility, than the Elements of Euclid, or any other collection of principles. Those who will insist, that such creeds and catechisms do not contain the truth, must prove their point by reference to Scripture, which is the acknowledged test and criterion; but to condemn them generally, is to beg the question, both as to their truth and their pernicious tendency. For if they are really pernicious, they cannot be true; but if they are true, they cannot be pernicious. If founded on truth, it cannot be matter of just *regret*, but rather of the contrary, that the mind should be brought to "a stagnant" and fixed "condition." What harm, for instance, can be likely to accrue, or rather, what good may not be expected to flow, from the mind being brought into a fixed state, in regard to the very important truths contained in those two beautiful summaries of the Church Catechism, which contain our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbour? Can such instruction, or such forms of belief, and principles of conduct, be said to take any man out of a state of *perfectibility*? Neither can law *in general* be said to tend to fix the human mind in a stagnant condition, in any way that is prejudicial, while it may be confined, and always should be so, to the mere imposition of such wholesome restraints, as have both truth and equity for their foundation: for truth and equity *should* be binding, without all doubt, and invariably and permanently so.

*Tests* will always be misunderstood and misrepresented: it is certainly not an *uniformity* of opinions, that is either the subject or occasion of them; but clearly, and indisputably, a *diversity* of opinions and principles. "The intent," says Bishop Sherlock, "is to keep *Dissenters* out of the State, not to force them into the Church;" and which, he observes, is evident, from the circumstance of "their meetings being tolerated by the very Act, (1st William and Mary,) which expressly extends the test to them." At all events a great mistake is made, when they are considered as qualifications in themselves, instead of the proofs of previous qualifications, as they should be. They are only enquiries, on the part of the State, into the acknowledged

knowledge principles of the individual. If they were compulsory, they would manifestly soon be useless; a general conformity of opinion would render every sort of test unnecessary.

As to the question concerning the universality of the Christian dispensation, we ought always to distinguish between the *propagation* of Christianity, and its *effects*. "As no man ever denied," says Dr. Clarke, "but that the benefit of the death of Christ extended backwards to those who lived *before* his appearance in the world; so no man can prove, but that the same benefit may likewise extend itself forwards to those who never heard of his appearance, though they lived *after* it." *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 356. The universality of Christianity, as a dispensation of salvation, is certainly by no means to be measured by the extent of its propagation, according to the judgment and opinion, not only of our own Protestant Divines, but of many of the ancient Fathers; notwithstanding Mr. Gibbon so peremptorily asserts the contrary, upon the sole authority of Tertullian. See *Kett's Vib Bampton Lecture*: the passage there referred to from *Justin Martyr, Apol. ad Ant. P.* p. 65. edit. Sylburg. 1593; in which he not only expresses a hope, that "Socrates, and those who resembled him in virtue, would escape the divine displeasure in another life; but, with a peculiar allusion to the general benefits imparted by the divine *Logos*, dignifies them "with the appellation of *Christians*;" is certainly very striking; and, though it escaped the notice of Mr. Gibbon, has been cited by another Infidel for a very different purpose; namely, to prove that the primitive Christians were so *tolerant*, as to account a virtuous man a Christian, *though otherwise an Atheist*. This is Helvetius's representation of Justin Martyr's opinion upon the subject, in which certainly the testimony of that holy Father is as much misrepresented, as in the other case it was overlooked or slighted. Justin's expression is, καὶ ἄθεοι ἐνομίσθησαν, though they may have been *accounted Atheists*; as for instance, Σωκράτης καὶ Ἡράκλειτος, καὶ οἱ ὅμοιοι αὐτοῖς that is, οἱ μετὰ λόγον βιώσαντες, who under a system of natural religion, or Paganism, lived agreeably to the divine will. It has often certainly been

been strongly insisted upon by some of our best Divines, that the doctrine of the Scripture is, that the virtue of Christ's oblation was effectual *from the creation* to the pardon of the truly penitent and sincere. See *Barrow's Sermons*, on *Universal Redemption*, Sermon XL. See also *Leland's Answer to Tindal*, Part II. ch. xvi. *Seed's Posthumous Works*, vol. i. Sermon V. *Edwards's Preservative against Socinianism*, Disc. II. 109.

Mr. Gibbon however persists in asserting, not only that it was the opinion of the primitive Church, that the wisest and most virtuous of the Pagans would be condemned for their ignorance or disbelief of the divine truth, but that it is still the public doctrine of all the Christian Churches, and particularly that the ministers and members of the established Church of these realms *must* believe so, as the undeniable conclusion to be drawn from the viiith and xviiiith of the Articles. From Dr. Chelsum's remarks, it would seem that this assertion concerning the two Articles did not appear in the first edition of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. If so, its insertion in a note to the 8vo edition may be regarded as Mr. Gibbon's last appeal in proof of his unwarrantable charge against us. Now, assuredly, this undeniable conclusion, which Mr. G. pretends to draw from the viiith and xviiiith Articles, will not be generally conceded to him. The first of the two Articles merely states the simple proposition, that the three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed; and for the best of all possible reasons, because they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture. If Mr. Gibbon would insist upon interpreting these creeds differently from other people, he alone should be answerable for the conclusions he draws. But the damnable clauses of the Athanasian Creed are too generally held to relate to the *absolute* and *indispensable* necessity of *knowing* and *embracing* the Gospel: whereas they only relate to the keeping the terms of our faith pure and undefiled, when once known and professed: which I shall have occasion to explain elsewhere.

As to the xviiiith Article, we might almost insist upon its asserting the very contrary to what Mr. Gibbon would infer: for it is expressly designed to establish the universality of the Christian redemption, so much  
so

so as to pronounce those anathematized who presume to say that *any* are, or will be, saved, *but through Jesus Christ*. The Gentiles will not be saved *by* their obedience to the law written in their hearts, *exclusive* of the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ; though such obedience will be the condition of Christ's merits being applied to them, under any circumstances of invincible ignorance of the Gospel; as the not having had it duly preached to them, or ever proposed to them, as an object of faith. The Article was not meant to be opposed to the universality of Christ's redemption, but to the dangerous doctrine of *indifference*: for though the Pagan of old times may by his virtues retrospectively become the object of Christ's atonement and mediation; yet it does not follow that such obedience to the law natural will save those who wilfully reject and despise the terms of the Gospel, and, in spite of our Lord's own assurance, that "no man cometh to the Father but by him," persist in trusting to their own righteousness to save them, and to such forms of worship as their fancy leads them to adopt. The Article does not state, that the virtuous Pagan who lived before the times of the Gospel will not be saved through the efficacy of the blood of Christ: but it anathematizes those, who, in contradiction to the word of God, and *since the promulgation of Christianity*, maintain, that any will be saved except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. And most wholesome doctrine this is, for "in vain did Christ reveal the Gospel, "and in vain did he command it to be preached "through the whole world," if men are to be saved exclusively of Christ's interposition. The Article is designed in short, not to shut, but to open the doors of the Church; for since not even the Pagan, to whom the Gospel was never preached, can be saved except through Christ, much less is it to be expected that those to whom the "pure word of God" has been preached, and the terms of the Christian covenant made known, will be freely justified upon any other terms. To prefer, and to trust to, any other mode of salvation, is now no less than to "despise the riches of God's mercy," and to neglect the covenant of his grace, "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was con-  
firmed

“firmed to us by them that heard HIM; God bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.” Hebrews ii. 3, 4.

Page 204. note (2).

*Reason can never inform us whence we came, or what is to become of us.]* See Lord Bolingbroke's Works, vol. v. and the xvth chapter of Mr. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, already referred to in the 22d Note to Sermon I. The former acknowledges the insufficiency of Reason to inform us of our *entrance* into the world; not indeed without expressing his incredulity in regard to the accounts we have: “Reason will tell us no better *how men came into the world*, than history or tradition does.” And as to our *departure* from this world, Mr. Gibbon assures us, that however Reason may serve to point out the *probability* of a *future state*, “only Revelation can ascertain its existence.”

Page 205. note (3).

*Nothing amounting to positive contradiction can possibly be alleged against the peculiar credentials of the Jewish and Christian Revelations, such as prophecies and miracles.]* Though every expedient should be tried to get rid of the evidence of prophecy and miracle, yet thus much is certain, that “nothing is *absolutely incredible*, but what is *impossible*.” See *Church's Answer to Middleton*, and *Leng's Boyle's Lectures*, Sermons xiii. xiv.

Now that neither prophecy nor miracle is impossible, is at least tacitly acknowledged by those who have been most eminent for their incredulity; Mr. Hume and Rousseau particularly: all their objections turning, not upon the impossibility of either, but upon the incompetency of their evidence; and both of them having, in the midst of their objections, supposed cases, in which not only prophecy and miracle would be both possible and reasonable; but their evidence, and the testimony concerning them, complete. Rousseau indeed supposes his case to be so much in the extreme, as not to be within the reach of possibility: but Mr.  
Hume's

Hume's case is such a concession as affects his whole argument against miracles. See *Dr. Campbell's* excellent *Dissertation on Miracles*, Part I. §. 3. in which this is fully proved. See however also *Dr. Leland's* xviii<sup>th</sup> and xix<sup>th</sup> Letters in his *View of Deistical Writers*, 5<sup>th</sup> edit. and *Dr. Adams's Answer to Hume*. Rousseau's three requisites, which he insists upon as indispensable in the case of prophecy, have been already shewn, in the Notes on Sermon II. not to be applicable to a *chain* and *series* of prophecies; and therefore cannot affect those belonging to the Jewish and Christian dispensations: and besides that they are inapplicable to a *chain* of prophecies, while the two former requisites are unquestionably not by any means essentially necessary to the proof even of a single prophecy; with regard to the third, an accumulation and coincidence of many prophecies, through a long succession of ages, such as the prophecies of Scripture, is in itself demonstration enough, that the fulfilment of them could not be the result of accidental circumstances. At all events, in regard to *miracles*, Rousseau would not be thought to deny *their possibility*, if we may trust *his own* words: for, in his 3<sup>d</sup> *Letter from the Mountains*, he says, "Do not conclude, because I do not look upon miracles as essential to Christianity, that I therefore *reject* miracles. No, Sir; I neither have rejected them, nor do I reject them. There is a wide difference between denying a thing, and the not affirming it; between positively rejecting, and negatively not admitting it." Indeed the possibility both of miracles and prophecy is indisputable; without the former the world could not have existed, and the latter is immediately connected with the most conspicuous of God's attributes, viz. his omnipotence and omniscience.

To allege, as Mr. Hume does, that we have the evidence of an uniform experience against the truth of miracles, is a *petitio principii*. It is first incumbent on him to *prove*, that there never were miracles; then only could he assert a constant experience in proof against them. But suppose *past* experience was thus uniform in favour of his argument, it could amount to no proof against miracles in time to come. Because God has operated no miracles in five or six thousand years; may he

he not in the hundred millions of years, which the world may endure? May he not interfere to put nature one inch out of her course in all that time? “Experience,” as Dr. Leland admirably observes, “may assure us, that facts or events are possible, but not that the contrary is impossible.” *View of Deistical Writers*, vol. i. 317. See also a small work by M. A. J. Roustan, entitled, *Lettres sur l’Etat présent du Christianisme*: Londres, 1768; where this point is ably argued.

As to the probability of miraculous interpositions on the part of God, it is well remarked, by the learned Professor Jenkin, in his *Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, vol. i. p. 26, that “it is an extravagant thing to conceive, that God should exclude himself from the works of his own creation, or that he should establish them upon such inviolable laws, as not to alter them upon some occasions, when he foresaw it would be requisite to do it. For unless the course of nature had been thus alterable, it would have been defective in regard to one great end for which it was designed; viz. it would have failed of being serviceable to the designs of Providence upon such occasions.” Apply this to the cases of Ahab, Nebuchadnezzar, and Sennacherib, alluded to in Note 10. Sermon I. What horrible consequences might have flowed, in each of those instances, from the daring defiance of God, had he not interposed by miracles! Consult also *Professor Vince’s two Sermons on Christianity*, 1798; where he argues against Hume, that “the moral good and tendency of miracles puts them upon a footing with the common physical effects producible in the course of nature. The latter, being appointed by God to minister to the physical wants of man, do not differ in principle from miracles wrought by the same Providence for moral ends and purposes.”

Had God never, in any age of the world, interposed miraculously, we may judge what notions would have been entertained of his Providence, from the conduct of those eminent Infidels of this age of Reason, MM. Volney and Diderot: the latter having denied the very being of God, from his own power of writing against it; and the former constantly arguing against the Scriptures, from

from the frequent instances of prosperity and success attending unbelievers. But the OLD Testament tells us it was *not so at first*: and the NEW, that henceforth such differences and distinctions are reserved for a future life. See also *Leland's Answer to Tindal*, as to the probability of miraculous interpositions, Part I. ch. iii. where he very well argues, that though God be immutable and perfect, yet, unless man were so too, there is no reason why God may not add to his former laws, and vary the methods of his Providence.

Mr. Hume is pleased to ask, "What reply can be made to those who affirm, that miracles have always been confined to the early and fabulous ages?" "The reply is easy," says Bishop Horne; "that miracles *were* performed by Christ and his apostles, in the age of all others esteemed the most polite and learned; and that the adversaries of those days never thought of denying the facts." *Letters on Infidelity*, Letter IX. But supposing miracles *had* been confined to the early, and what Mr. Hume chooses to call indiscriminately the *fabulous ages*. There might have been good reason for this: and the very credulity of those ages, so far from bringing true miracles into discredit, might be especially alleged as one reason for such an interposition on the part of God. For if they were credulous only through ignorance of the operation of natural causes, (and such ignorance Rousseau insists upon as the ground of all miraculous pretensions,) that very ignorance might give the more knowing among them such a power of deceiving them, that when the whole world were given to idolatry, it must have been peculiarly necessary not only for God to interpose generally, but that the *true* prophets should have a command of such credentials, expressly to counteract the delusions of the false prophets and magicians. Origen argues very well, *contr. Cels.* lib. iii. that when all the neighbouring nations were pretending to have intercourse with their Gods, and through their auguries and oracles to have knowledge of future events, and to perform miracles and wonders, it would have been strange and unaccountable, if the only worshippers of the true God, who were taught to hold those false Gods in contempt, had had no predictions and



and miracles to oppose to such delusions; if it were only to vindicate the omnipotence and providence of the Creator of the universe, to give them a proper confidence in the grounds of their own faith, and to convert idolaters from the error of their ways. The passage is admirable, and the argument particularly striking. Camb. edit. p. 113. And certainly the design and intent of *prophecy*, at least in those early ages, may be said to be expressly so explained, Isaiah xlviii. 5. "Before it came to pass I shewed it thee; *lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them.*" And the Urim and Thummim of the Jews, the *oracle* of the true God, has been thought to have been expressly opposed to the oracular images of the Pagans. See *Jackson's Chronological Antiquities*, vol. iii. 239. In Isaiah xlv. 6, 7. prophecy is particularly insisted on, as the distinguishing credential of the true God.

The objections to the Scripture prophecies, on account of their obscurity, have been sufficiently answered by many writers; see however very particularly *Bishop Hurd's Ist and IIIrd Sermons on Prophecy*; *Leslie's Truth of Christianity demonstrated*, p. 149. fol. edit. and *Jenkin's Reasonableness and Certainty of Christianity*, b. ii. ch. 7. where the subject is very ably handled, and many substantial reasons assigned for the obscurity of the genuine prophecies.

As to the secondary and typical application of many of the prophecies, see also the same authors, and Leland's VIIth Letter in his *View of Deistical Writers*. There are some very ingenious Letters upon the subject likewise in the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine* for March and April, 1804. As to the point itself of secondary senses, it is certain, that any supernatural prediction may as easily embrace many objects as one; and at all events there are prophecies enough applicable to Christ in a primary sense, to satisfy any reasonable enquirer, as has been abundantly shewn by Bishop Chandler, in his *Defence of Christianity, from the Prophecies of the Old Testament*, 1725. and many other authors. See also *Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho.*

That Christianity appeals to the testimony of miracles,

cles, has been already shewn, in answer to Rousseau, Note 6. Sermon I. That the also appeals to the testimony of prophecy cannot with any reason be doubted. But there is one appeal of this kind recorded by the Evangelists, which is certainly very remarkable; I mean the conversation which our Saviour is represented to have held with the two disciples, on their way to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. when, "beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." Had not the Evangelist been fully assured in his own mind that such things were easily to be discovered, by any who would diligently search the Scriptures of the Old Testament, could any circumstance in the whole history of our Saviour's ministry have been more worth preserving than this conversation, in proof of his Messiahship? Would none of our Lord's disciples have secured this evidence for us? Would St. Luke, in particular, who seems to have written expressly to supply what might be wanting in the other Gospels, have omitted it? Would not the Holy Spirit of God have dictated this important testimony to the Evangelists, had it not been a matter of certainty, that the predictions of Moses and the Prophets were perspicuous enough to those who would refer to them for their own conviction? The omission of this discourse appears to me a positive proof of the Evangelist's settled persuasion, that the fact was easily to be established: for it would otherwise have exposed the cause he was engaged in, to mention it without necessity. Common sense would have dictated it to him to suppress a reference, which could not be satisfactory; and above all, not to have represented our Saviour as reproving his disciples for a slowness of heart, in not discovering what was not to be found in the writings referred to; or, as others would infer, which could not be brought to apply, but by art and subtlety, quibble and conceit. Several, I know, have endeavoured to find a reason for the suppression of this discourse, as for instance, Dr. Burnet, in his Treatise *De Fide et Officiis Christianorum*, p. 120. c. 7. and several have attempted to supply the chasm; but it is best supplied by a general reference to the Old Testament, beginning the chain of prophecy with Moses, and pursuing it up-  
wards

wards through the succeeding prophets; not confining ourselves merely to the events of Christ's death, and resurrection, and exaltation, as some have done rather injudiciously, (see *Mede's Discourse on Luke xxiv. 45.* and Doddridge's Notes on the place, in his *Family Expositor*, sect. 197.) but the general circumstances of his ministry.

A modern divine, Mr. Clowes, of Manchester, a great advocate for the reveries of Baron Swedenborg, concludes from ver. 45. where Christ is said to "have opened the understandings" of his disciples, that their acquaintance with the mere letter of Scripture was not sufficient. But certainly the expression, ver. 25. "O slow of heart," implies a capacity in the disciples to have understood and to have applied the prophecies, without any *miraculous illumination*. See the introduction to Clowes' Sermons, pub. 1803.

The gift of prophecy being clearly assigned to Moses by our Lord himself, not only in the passage referred to, but in many other parts of the New Testament; and being demonstrable besides from the state and condition of the people of Israel, from their first original to the destruction of Jerusalem, which, as Professor Jenkin has observed, was the perpetual fulfilling of prophecies contained in the books of Moses; we cannot have any difficulty to believe, that he had also the power of working miracles; and thus the fulfilment, not only of the Mosaic, but of the Scripture prophecies in general, may reasonably be held to authenticate all that we read in the sacred history of the *miraculous* powers with which the Prophets of God, and the Apostles of Jesus Christ, were severally invested. One credential is a reasonable proof of the existence of the other; a prophecy accomplished is a miracle. See this test insisted on in *Sykes's Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion*, chap. ix.

Page 208. note (4).

"The total disappearance of a star may probably be the destruction of its system, and the appearance of a new star, the creation of a new system of planets." *Vince's Astronomy*, vol. i. ch. 27. And at the conclusion of the 2d vol. the same learned author observes, "the disappearance

“ of some stars may be the destruction of that system at  
 “ the time appointed by the Deity for the probation of  
 “ its inhabitants; and the appearance of new stars may  
 “ be the formation of new systems, for new races of  
 “ beings then called into existence to adore the works  
 “ of their Creator. Thus we may conceive the Deity  
 “ to have been employed from all eternity, and thus  
 “ continue to be employed for endless ages; forming  
 “ new systems of beings to adore him, and transplant-  
 “ ing those beings already formed into happier re-  
 “ gions, where they have better opportunities of medi-  
 “ tating on his works; and still rising in their enjoy-  
 “ ments, go on to contemplate system after system,  
 “ through the boundless universe.” Dr. Herschel has  
 given us a catalogue of stars formerly seen, now lost;  
*Phil. Trans.* 1783.

To prove that the world cannot have been eternal,  
 Dr. Sykes observes, in his *Connection of Natural and Re-  
 vealed Religion*, that “ it implies no contradiction to  
 “ *suppose* the earth, the sun, or any planet, to be away,  
 “ and the space, which now they fill, to be left empty:  
 “ and what is supposable, without any contradiction,  
 “ to be true of any one of the worlds of the universe,  
 “ is likewise supposable of any, or of all, the rest.  
 “ Now if you can suppose one world away, that world  
 “ cannot exist by any necessity in its nature: and if  
 “ one world may be removed without contradiction,  
 “ so may all the rest; and in course none of them can  
 “ be necessary in existence or duration.”

*Page 209. note (5.)*

Though the invention, improvement, progress, and  
 perfection of some arts and sciences may seem to be in-  
 volved in much obscurity; yet it is undeniable, that  
 many of the *most important* may be traced back, as I  
 have observed in the Discourse, “ to such a state of  
 “ rudeness and imperfection, as must serve to shew,  
 “ that their first invention cannot have been *very* dis-  
 “ tant and remote.” Among those of most material  
 importance to man, we may certainly reckon medicine,  
 surgery, and pharmacy in all its branches; writing,  
 printing, and, as particularly connected with both, the  
 art of making paper. Even the first discovery of fire,  
 and

and its uses, is noticed in the records of most nations. The application, besides, of the magnetic virtue of the loadstone to the purposes of navigation, a discovery so indispensably necessary to the commerce and communication of the different nations of the globe, may certainly be traced to no very remote æra. Consult, on the newness of arts and sciences, *Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology*; *Dr. Wotton's and Mr. Baker's Reflections on Learning*; *Universal History*, b. i.; the third part of *Bishop Law's Theory of Religion*; *Nicholls's Conferences*, Part I. *Campbell on Miracles*; and very particularly the *President Goguet's* very learned work on the subject, with the *Dissertations* annexed to the third volume.

To talk of the loss and revival of such arts as the foregoing is absurd; for, if some trifling arts, or some not of indispensable utility, may have vanished or degenerated in the lapse of ages, yet, as Dr. Wotton, in the preface to his very learned work, reasonably asks, who hath suffered, since the days of Tubal-Cain, the use of metals to be lost in the world? the use of letters to be intermitted, since the days of Cadmus? When have the arts of planting, weaving, building, been laid aside? or the use of the loadstone forgotten? See also the *President Goguet's Preface*, p. vii.

Besides the argument drawn from the novelty of arts and sciences, there are circumstances connected therewith, which have not, as far as I know, been ever duly considered and enquired into; namely, the consumption of exhaustible commodities, such as the products of mines of all sorts. It is proposed as a question in the *Lettres de quelques Juifs à M. Voltaire*, whether there was not formerly more gold and silver in the world, than now. See p. 397. and in a note, p. 407. the account of Agatharcides, preserved by Photius, of the immense quantity of gold among the Alileans and Casandrins, in the southern parts of Africa, is particularly noticed. Dean Prideaux has given us the same extract, in his attempt to settle the true country of *Ophir*. *Connection*, Part I. b. i. where may be also seen the immense amount of the gold supplied by David for the building of the temple. But in the fifth book the learned author particularly treats of the *superabundance* of gold and silver in those early times, where he has

occasion to speak of the extravagant sum offered by Haman, for the destruction of the Jews, Esther iii. 9. See particularly pp. 311, 312. and notes f, g, h, &c. See also the account of the Spanish mines worked by the Phœnicians, in *Gibbon's Roman History*, vol. i. ch. vi. 258.

It is generally admitted, by those who have treated of the origin of arts and sciences, either professedly or historically, that the precious metals were originally found on the surface of the earth, and were procurable in great abundance, without the labour of digging for them: they were also employed for purposes, for which they were not fitted by nature; as for arms, and tools to cultivate the earth. See *Diod. Sic.* lib. i. The Egyptians put gold and silver to all sorts of uses. *Herodot.* lib. iii. And this was found to be much more recently the case with the Mexicans and Peruvians, when the Spaniards first explored America. M. Bailly, in his eccentric *Letters on the Atlantis of Plato*, seems to make it an argument of the great antiquity of his favourite hyperboreans, that arms and tools of brass and gold have been found in abundance near the river Jenilca. Now, besides that the want of iron instruments is a direct proof of the little progress they must have made in metallurgy; if he had turned to the 5th book of *Lucretius*, he would have found, that such has been the progress of things from the first. Gold and silver were first used, then brass, and lastly iron. So far, therefore, from such relics being any proof of the perfection of the arts in such countries, they evince the very contrary; and whatever people they belonged to, so far from being marks of refinement, or of any great degree of perfection, they plainly shew them to have been in a comparative state of rudeness, and in the very infancy of civilization. And thus perhaps what we read of the profuse splendor, and riches, and copious ornaments of ancient buildings, instead of supplying arguments for the great antiquity of the world, may rather serve to demonstrate in a direct manner the novelty of our continents, and even lay a foundation perhaps for curious calculations in regard to the duration of our globe, in its present habitable state: for that many minerals both of use and ornament are in a state of actual exhaustion,  
we

we cannot, I think, possibly doubt. Coals have not been in general use many centuries, and yet some mines are already entirely exhausted, and forges and manufactories at an end, that had been erected for the particular local advantages of the fuel they supplied. I am obliged to cite from memory, but I am pretty well assured, that there is much that is very curious upon this subject to be found in *Williams's Mineralogy*, or *Natural History of the Mineral Kingdom*, printed in Scotland.

The conceit of the *growth of minerals*, which seems to have been chiefly founded on a mistaken notion of stalactical depositions, is now too generally exploded, to afford any expectation, in the present state of things, of an adequate supply and replacing of such consumed and consumable commodities; nor are we sufficiently acquainted with the operations of nature, in the production of metals, to ascertain the probability, or even possibility, of any copious renewal of those articles: and yet it is calculated, that in our town of Birmingham alone, the quantity of gold and silver annually employed in gilding and plating, and *thereby disqualified from ever afterwards appearing in the shape of those metals*, amounts to more than 50,000 sterling; equal to the 120th part of the whole annual importation of those metals into Europe, at the rate of six millions a year. See *Smith's Wealth of Nations*, b. i. ch. 11. May it not admit of a question, whether the operations of nature, absolutely *necessary* for the production of metallic veins, the dislocation and fracture of strata to afford room for them, and the formation of such extensive beds of coals, and other bituminous matters as we meet with, may not be so violent as to require that the globe should be uninhabitable at the time; and therefore, that the origin or renewal of our race *must needs be referable to some such catastrophe as an universal deluge*, or a general arrangement of the materials of the globe; and that not *very remote*? But this will be considered more at large in the Notes to the next Discourse.

Page 209. note (6).

*When once we give up the Mosaic æra of the creation of man, as fabulous, we have comparatively an eternity before us.]* If the assumed antiquity of some nations

exceeded the Mosaic account by only a few years, or a few ages, we might be more disposed to examine their pretensions : but when we come to 470,000 years, (the Chaldean account, according to Cicero,) to the Egyptian, Phœnician, Chinese, and above all the Hindu annals, of millions of years, it is impossible to conceive the art of writing to have been so late a discovery, as to have secured to us no records, that can be at all relied on. Dr. Toulmin, a modern writer on the antiquity of the world, who, from the dates of his publications, appears to have been, in the year 1780, only assured of the immense antiquity of the globe, and not to have conjectured it to be *eternal* till the year 1785, (what progress his ideas afterwards made we know not,) sets aside *all* accounts of the origin of the earth and of man as barbarous tales, fabricated in the *rude infancy* of society. Now none of these accounts themselves can be proved to be older than Moses, as he must know, to whatever extent their histories are carried back ; and yet their times are called the *rude infancy of society*, by a man who insists upon the eternity of the world. He tells us, “ human testimony or tradition, “ even granting them their utmost latitude, are but of “ the most limited extent ; that it is only in the *advanced state* of refinement, that the art of writing “ could at any time or in any country possibly have “ taken its origin ;” and he adds, as if it followed as an immediate conclusion from the above premises, “ Reason will be found to announce, without the shadow of hesitation, that the *human* species, &c. fluctuating in their increase and decrease, their barbarism and refinement, actually have flourished, amidst “ the unceasing revolutions of nature, through an eternity of existence !”

This same art of writing is a great stumbling-block to Deists and Atheists. If the first written histories give us an account of the origin of things, they were *barbarous* ages, and could tell us nothing but fables ; but when they want to make the world very old, then writing is the invention of a refined age, and that age nobody knows how remote. Voltaire forgets himself so far as to let us into this secret. Moses, says he, could not have written the Pentateuch, because at that time



time they knew no method of writing but the hieroglyphical. They had nothing to write upon but wood, and brick, and stone, and therefore could never write such a great book (*gros livre*) as the Pentateuch: which is certainly a very small book, as the whole Bible is, comparatively. But when, on another occasion, the same *careless* writer (to say no worse of him) has to speak of Sanchoniathon, that favourite rival of the Jewish legislator, then, he was at least contemporary with Moses, and used *alphabetical characters*, and derived his history from the *writings* of Thaut, who flourished 800 years before him. See *Lettres de quelques Juifs*, &c.

Page 212. note (7).

*Must have been as bold an imposture as could well have been attempted.*] “Neque vero cuiquam prudenti credibile fiet Mosem, qui non Ægyptios tantum hostes habebat, sed et plurimas gentes alias, Idumæos, Arabas, Phœnicas; vel de mundi ortu et rebus antiquissimis ea ausum palam prodere, quæ aut aliis scriptis prioribus revinci possent, aut pugnanti sibi haberent persuasionem veterem et communem.” *Grot. de Verit.* l. i. §. 16.

When Moses is accused or suspected of writing in conformity with the cosmogonies of other nations, this at least must be granted, that they are as much in conformity with him. Now it is remarkable, that while the former are so enveloped in fable, that no philosopher pretends to compare his own system with them; the latter is so simple and so clear, and so connected with the history of the earth and of man, that it is particularly open to examination, and capable of being verified. Had there been any foundation for the extravagant chronology of Manetho, Berosus, or the still more ancient records of Sanchoniathon, how could Moses ever have dreamt of succeeding in an attempt to convince the world that none of these nations had existed for so long a term as 2500 years? Mr. Volney calls Moses on one occasion *artful* and *subtle*, and yet conceives he borrowed his cosmogony from India; agreeing with M. Dupuis all the while in ascribing such an age to the world as is wholly and entirely inconsistent with the

Genesis

Genesis of Moses. Had Moses gone *beyond* the records of ancient nations, and carried his chronology much *higher*, he might indeed with reason have been reputed at least as cunning as the Chaldeans, who, as Lactantius says, (speaking expressly of their chronological extravagancies,) “in quo quia se posse argui non putabant, liberum sibi crediderunt esse, mentiri.” Lib. vii. 14. see also the notes to that chapter in the *variorum* edition. But where could Moses’s *art* or *subtlety* be, in beginning his history with a fact so perfectly in opposition to known and acknowledged records, had any such really existed as it is pretended, and in the very midst of the nations to whom those records are assigned? for while Mr. Volney, M. Dupuis, and others, have concluded that Moses borrowed from the Hindus, the German *New Expositors*, MM. Teller, Eichhorn, &c. supposed his cosmogony was borrowed from the Chaldeans and Egyptians. And yet so little did he resemble those he is said to have borrowed from, that the learned Dr. Craven very properly enquires, “How was it that “the Jews drew *not* waters from the fountains of “Chaldea and Egypt, or *rather*, whence had *they* their “clear and pure waters, when all the springs were “every where muddy and corrupt?” See his *Discourses on the Jewish and Christian Dispensations*, p. 51. About 500 years before Christ, Democritus and many other philosophers, who maintained that the world had had a beginning, applied themselves to prove the newness of it by all the means that history and critical knowledge could furnish; yet we do not see that it was ever undertaken to refute them solidly: though, had the pretended Babylonian and Egyptian antiquities been true, nothing would have been easier. See *Goguet*, vol. iii. 283.

Page 213. note (8).

*If all that can be reasonably done in this way has not yet been done, &c.*] Nothing appears to be more difficult than to keep etymology within its proper bounds, when it is made the foundation of any system. Though the very learned and respectable Mr. Bryant laid down rules for the conduct of such enquiries, it is very doubtful whether he was not guilty of infringing them

them himself; and that many of his followers have done so, *is past all doubt*. Etymologies, therefore must always be left to tell their own story, and the discerning reader, to separate what is reasonable from what is fanciful; for that the whole is fanciful can never be pretended. As to the comparison of ancient mythologies with the Mosaic writings, this certainly also admits of being carried too far; and the Abbé Houtteville, in his ingenious discourse of the Authors *for* and *against* Christianity, has given a very proper caution upon the subject in his review of the writings of the celebrated Bishop of Avranches, M. Huet. The Bible tells the story in a plain and simple manner; it expressly, and upon all occasions, describes idolaters as apostates; as having “gone astray,” and “turned aside” from the true and primitive religion; as having wilfully “become abominable, filthy, and corrupt.” Their fables and absurd additions therefore must be to themselves; the original need not be too sedulously sought for in the midst of such rubbish; it is *miraculous*, and therefore proof enough in itself of the divine authority of the Pentateuch, and of the Hebrew accounts of the Deity, that, when every other part of the world fell into such corruptions, the knowledge of the true God was preserved among the Jews. And it may be a fit answer to make to those who think the sacred writers had a motive to impose upon the world in the ambition to appear as the founders of a religion, and the first ministers of a divine revelation, that they particularly disclaim the merit they might have pretended to, of being the first to promulgate the true religion; for they constantly refer to a time preceding the very first beginnings of idolatry; “I have declared, I have saved, and I have shewed, *“when there was no strange God among you:”* which is the more to be attended to, because Mr. Hume, and many of his way of thinking, peremptorily insist upon it, that Polytheism, or Idolatry, was, and necessarily *must have been*, the first and most ancient religion of mankind. Mr. Hume even rests his argument on the testimony of *the most ancient records of the human race*: “The farther we go back to antiquity, the more of idolatry do we find; *no marks, no symptoms* of any more perfect religion.” See his *Nat. Hist. of Religion*. Can  
any

any thing be more perfectly false? Again he says, "As far as writing or history reaches, mankind appear to have been *universally* Polytheists." Mr. Hume, I know, thought that *true history* began with Thucydides; but neither Mr. Hume, nor any other Freethinker, can absolutely annihilate the testimony of the Bible. Could Mr. Hume pretend that King David did not exist before Thucydides? nor the Book of Chronicles, in which the prayer and thanksgiving of that righteous king are recorded, and in which is that noble testimony to the unity of God, not as a new or philosophical discovery, but as derived from revelation and tradition, "O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears." 1 Chron. xvii. 20. and 2 Sam. vii. 22.

Instead then of searching for resemblances in the Pagan mythologies, which the Infidel is too apt to turn against us, as supposing all to be equally mythological, let us for ever insist upon the notorious and marked difference between them; especially in regard to the acknowledgment of that great and fundamental truth of all, the unity of God: which not only Mr. Hume, but Lord Bolingbroke asserted to be a discovery impossible in the earliest ages of the world. "This rational, this orthodox belief, this first true principle of all theology, was not established, nor could be so, till—(when?) the manhood of philosophy." And yet, like Mr. Hume, who calls Moses a barbarous writer of a more barbarous age, Lord Bolingbroke assures us, the notions of the sacred penmen were plainly those of an ignorant people, and an unphilosophical age. And Voltaire, with his usual flippancy, speaking of the Jews, says, "vous demandez quelle étoit la *philosophie* des Hébreux—l'article sera bien court—ils n'en avoient aucune." His friend Diderot however lays it down as a maxim, that the idea of the unity of God could not be, but "le fruit tardif des méditations humaines." It is incredible how men will persist in overlooking the *marvellous* accounts which the Scriptures of the Old Testament contain, of the being, and most *undoubted* attributes of God. Every Freethinker admits that the Jews were a barbarous people, and lived in an obscure corner, and  
were

were in no manner addicted to philosophy; and yet in their writings, the antiquity of which it is impossible to doubt, the purest Theism, the most orthodox and fundamental principles of all theology, and actually a most correct chain of philosophical reasoning, are to be found, *Infidels themselves being judges*: for Lord Bolingbroke and Diderot, whom I have cited, both admit that Abraham was a pure Theist; and the former, that the unity of God was acknowledged in the world previous to his vocation, (of which there is no record but the holy Scriptures :) and Mr. Paine admits that “the sixth Psalm, and some parts of Job, are true deistical compositions, and are founded upon *natural philosophy*, since they treat of God through his works.” And yet the sacred writers made no claim to be accounted philosophers; (see *Leland’s View of Deistical Writers*, vol. ii. 107.) they left philosophy to instruct the heathens, as it ought to have done, and gratefully acknowledged, that *they* had the additional light of divine Revelation; see Psalm cxlvii.

As to the collateral testimony to the truth of the Mosaic cosmogony, which Pagan mythologies are thought to supply, it seems to be a case sufficiently admitted by Deists; while Moses is continually held by them to be a plagiarist, and to have borrowed, as it has been stated before, from the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, and lastly from the Hindus. And Lord Bolingbroke expressly asserts it to be his opinion, “that three or four ancient neighbouring nations seemed to have a common fund of traditions, which they varied according to their different systems of religion, philosophy, and policy.” Vol. iii. of his Works, p. 282. We want no more than this to be granted; only Lord Bolingbroke in another place is pleased to say, “We have nothing to do with the antediluvian world.” But we shall insist upon it that we have every thing to do with the history of the antediluvian world, as recorded in the Genesis of Moses, where we not only have a regular account of the creation of the earth and of man, and of the origin of evil, but of the patriarchal religion, in which the unity of God was an acknowledged tenet. How much more right and reason have we to insist upon no arguments  
being

being drawn from the possibility of the world being older, and of there having been more ancient records! If any exist more ancient than the Bible, let them be produced: whatever is not extant in any shape at all, is out of the question. Are metaphysical reasonings, as Goguet observes, to destroy historical evidence? But even if any are extant older than the Pentateuch, the date of the *record* of the cosmogony is not the matter we are so much concerned with, as the dates of the *events recorded*, and the true nature of the *primitive, unadulterated* religion of the Patriarchs; in which unquestionably, according to Moses, the unity of God was a distinguishing feature; a matter of Revelation indeed in the first instance, but which the sacred writers do not appear to have been so unphilosophical as not to have enforced and supported with suitable *arguments*. Indeed, if they are not to be supposed to have been inspired, I think it would be easy to shew, (nor would the proofs which I have been at the pains to collect be withheld, but that there is not room to insert them,) that, as *uninspired* writers, they are better Philosophers than any of the sages of antiquity, Plato not excepted; more sublime Poets than any of the ancient bards, Homer and Pindar not excepted; and more respectable, more honest, more undaunted advocates of the truth, than any of the ancient Theists, Socrates not excepted. Their descriptions of the Deity, their exposure of the absurdities of idolatry, their fortitude in the vindication of God's majesty, and contempt of all popularity, acquired with any sacrifice of their religious principles, are the points we have to attend to, when we compare them with the priests and prophets, poets and philosophers of Pagan nations.

As to the collateral testimonies to the truth of the Bible, supplied by historians and other profane writers, so many have been at the pains to collect them, that they need not be given at length; and I have already referred to some writers, in whose works they will be found, at the end of Sermon IV. Many more might have been mentioned; but whoever wishes to pursue the subject, should by all means consult the references in Dr. Doddridge's *Lectures on Pneumatology, Ethics, and Divinity*,

*vinity*, published in 4to, Lond. 1763. an admirable addition to Grotius's celebrated 16th sect. of his first book *De Veritate*, &c.

Page 215. note (9).

*But though some have thought this possible, &c.]* The origin of languages seems to be a research which antiquaries cannot resist; but few theories upon the subject seem to have met with any extensive encouragement. As a theological question, it is somewhat inconsistent to expect to trace the languages of the earth back to any one common stock, as I have shewn in the Sermon; nevertheless it is a reasonable remark of I. Casaubon's, that those languages seem to have retained most of the Hebrew, that belong to countries most in the neighbourhood of Palestine. "Est enim verissimum, linguas cæteras eo manifestiora et magis expressa originis Hebraicæ vestigia servasse, et nunc servare, quo proprius ab antiqua et prima hominum sede abfuerunt." The same is observed in regard to other particulars by Dr. Hartley, in his *Observations on Man*, Prop. cxxiii. 4to edit. 1791. As many are still busy in tracing out the analogy of languages, and some the most remote and unconnected have been lately held to agree, I shall insert the following *criteria*, which have lately appeared in the Edinburgh Review of General Vallancey's Prospectus of an Irish Dictionary. "The Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldee, Syriac, and Phœnician, are indeed dialects of the same original language; and it may not be improper to mention the *criteria* by which we support our assertion. These dialects have the major of their words nearly the same both in sense and sound; their verbs are formed of a similar number of letters; their moods, tenses, numbers, and persons, are formed in the same manner, and by the same letters or particles. All the six dialects agree in the declension of their nouns, and in the genius of their construction: the nations which spoke them were contiguous, similar in customs and manners, and their written history records the fact of their common original. These are the *criteria* by which we maintain, that the affinities of all the tribes of mankind may be discovered with tolerable  
"accu-

“accuracy.” Too much certainly has been made of very slight and partial resemblances, and the *mania* for *radicals* has often reminded us of the expedient of Psammetichus recorded by Herodotus, and which upon the authority of the word *Beckos*, as is well known, transferred to the Phrygians the honour of being of superior antiquity to the Egyptians: but only for a time; for Goropius Becanus had the ingenuity afterwards to wrest the palm from the Phrygians, by shewing, that though *Beckos* signified *bread* in Phrygia, yet as *Becker* signified *baker* in German, the Germans were certainly the people pointed out by the exclamation of the Egyptian boys. The enquiry however, when conducted with sobriety, is certainly always curious, but not, I think, so much connected with theology as has been often supposed. On the origin of alphabetical characters, see *Shuckford's Connection*, b. iv. and *Warburton's Divine Legation*, but particularly the Discourses of the learned I. Johnson, Vicar of Cranbrook, vol. ii.

Page 218. note (10).

*The celebrated Astronomical Tables of the Hindus, however, have been supposed to supply us with data of much more certainty.]* I shall endeavour to compress what I have to say upon this head into as small a compass as possible, though so many circumstances in the history of the world seem to admit of being brought together in illustration of the point I have to establish, that much that is very curious must, I fear, be unavoidably omitted. The world has been so long amused with chronological extravagancies, as far as figures only are concerned, that it is not to be wondered, that when the Hindu records came to be examined, they should also be found to abound in similar perplexities. A people whose geographical system of the earth makes the circumference of the globe 2,456,000,000 British miles, (see *Mr. Wilford's paper*, art. xviii. of the 5th vol. of the *Asiatic Researches*,) and their mountains 491 miles high, may well be expected not to be behind hand with other nations, in their accounts of the antiquity of their country: a people who could invent for their god Brahma a year composed of the multiplication of  
two



two thousand ages, (each of above four millions of *our* years,) by 360, may well be expected not to stand upon much ceremony either with time or numbers in the fabrication of a chronological system. This is not said merely to expose them; it is their character by all accounts, to be consummately skilful in calculations, and in the combination and resolution of numbers. Sir William Jones discovered in the duration assigned to the several Indian *Yugs*, or ages, an arrangement, exceedingly curious: to give it in his own words, “the duration of historical ages,” says he, “must needs be very unequal and disproportionate, while that of the Indian *Yugs* is disposed so regularly and artificially, that it cannot be admitted as natural and probable. Men do not become reprobate in a geometrical progression, or at the termination of regular periods; yet so well proportioned are the *Yugs*, that even the length of human life is diminished as they advance, from an hundred thousand years in a subdule ratio; and as the number of principal *avatârs* in each decreases arithmetically from four, so the number of years in each decreases geometrically, and all together constitute the extraordinary sum of four millions three hundred and twenty thousand years; which aggregate multiplied by seventy-one is the period in which every *Menu* is believed to preside over the world.—The comprehensive mind of an Indian chronologist has no limits; the reigns of 14 *Menus* are only a single day of *Brâhmâ*, 50 of which have elapsed, according to the *Hindus*, from the time of the creation.” Sir William adds, that possibly this is only an astronomical riddle. (See the paper in the 1st vol. of *Asiatic Researches; on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India.*)

The celebrated M. le Gentil, who has done so much to elucidate the subject of Indian astronomy, confesses that at first he disdained to meddle with such extravagancies. (*Mémoires de l'Académie*, 1772.) It is to him however, that we are chiefly indebted for the Astronomical Tables which will be the subject of this note, and which may not be treated with indifference, after the respect that has been shewn to them by two such eminent and very learned men, as M. Bailly and Pro-

feffor Playfair. The great question seems to be, whether they were derived from actual observation, and what are the dates to be assigned to the particular observations on which they depend. Both M. Bailly and Professor Playfair, it is well known, refer them to actual observations; and M. Bailly has fixed on the epoch 3102 before our æra, which is that of the Tables of *Tirvalour*, in preference not only to the epochs 1569, and 1656, which are those of the *Narsapur* Tables, but to the epoch of the Tables of *Chrisnabouram*, viz. 1491 of our æra. M. Bailly however is for carrying back the Indian observations still further, namely, to 1200 years before the Kali Yug, or to 4302 before Christ: but this he professes to be only conjecture. What M. Bailly and Professor Playfair most decidedly agree in, if I mistake not, is, that the places of the sun and moon, at the beginning of the Kali Yug, or 4th age of the Hindus, *must have been determined by actual observation*; and that two elements of the Hindu astronomy, viz. the equation of the sun's center, and the obliquity of the ecliptic, seem to fix the origin of this astronomy 1000 or 1200 years earlier. Now the Kali Yug commenced anno 3102 before our æra; according to M. Bailly, Freret, and others.

I do not mean at all to discuss the question concerning the fact or æra of the actual observation insisted on, nor concerning the antiquity either of the Tables themselves, or of the celebrated astronomical work, the *Surya Siddhanta*. A few observations upon each will be sufficient, as it is principally my design to examine into the state of the question, as it relates to the chronology of the Bible, supposing what is most extraordinary in the case to be *true*. As to the fact—Mr. Marsden, who does justice to M. Bailly's very curious reasonings upon the subject, and to the Indians' early knowledge of astronomy, and some parts of mathematics connected therewith; is disposed to question the verity and possibility of such an observation, at such a period, and conceives that the supposed conjunction was later, and sought for as an epoch, and calculated retrospectively; [*Phil. Transactions*, 1790;] and he shews it to have been widely miscalculated. Mr. Bentley's calculations in the 6th vol. of the *Asiatic Researches*, to shew that such epochs might be assumed without much hazard of any perceptible

perceptible variation, are certainly very curious, and must be well known to every astronomer: his conjectures concerning the age of the *Surya Siddhanta* do not appear to be generally assented to. As to the epoch of 3102, which M. Bailly fixes on, he acknowledges to have chosen it in preference to others; first, because there was an eclipse at that time; and secondly, because there was, according to the Indians, a conjunction of *all* the planets. But this latter circumstance was not true; and M. Bailly himself says, the appearance of Venus must have been assumed through “le goût du “merveilleux.” See the *Discours Préliminaire* to his *Astronomie Indienne*, &c. p. 28; and consult Mr. Marsden’s paper in the *Phil. Transactions* already referred to.

It is not however with the fact itself that we have so much concern at present, as I observed before, as with the evidence M. Bailly would adduce in corroboration of the point he wishes to prove; and which led him into a course of chronological researches by no means undeserving our regard; as I think they particularly serve to shew, whatever M. Bailly’s real intention might be in bringing them forward, that, of all the embarrassed and extravagant computations of antiquity, none can with any reason be thought to ascend higher than the patriarchal ages, nor with any clearness beyond the flood. It seems pretty generally agreed, that of all sciences astronomy was the earliest cultivated; and there is great reason why it should have been so. For in the night, the ancients probably had no other guide but the stars; and, at all events, no other means of marking time, than by the rising and setting of the different constellations. [*Assermannus de Astronom. Arabum*, §. 1.] So that some imagined that Adam and Eve had correct notions of astronomy instilled into them for their use; (see the *Almagest* of *Ricciolus*;) a conceit which, however fanciful, at least serves to shew the great and almost indispensable importance attributed to the science in early ages: and we know that Josephus accounted for the longevity of the Patriarchs, by the necessity there was that they should outlive the period of the annus magnus, (600 years,) for astronomical purposes; and his references upon this head are numerous. *Ant. Jud.* lib. i. ch. iii. §. 9. (The Chaldæan Neros was a term of 600 years.)

years.) Nor is it out of our way to notice what he says of the proficiency of the family of Seth in the knowledge of astronomy, and of the pillars they erected to preserve their observations; for M. le Gentil, in his paper on the Indian astronomy in the *Mémoires de l'Académie* 1782, inclines to think that even the precession of the equinoxes was known before the flood, and that there was much more than time for such a discovery from Adam, according to the chronology of the LXX. and Josephus; and that this was one of the pieces of knowledge preserved by Noah; in which also M. Cassini seems to agree with him. He even observes, that the Indian Tables we are particularly treating of have a lapidary form, and conjectures therefore that they were originally engraved on stones; and as they seem to ascend beyond the deluge, they might have been preserved through it; a circumstance which, he himself adds, Josephus seems to confirm, with evident allusion to Seth's pillars. But to return to M. Bailly. In the Preliminary Discourse to his Indian Astronomy, he seeks to establish the certainty of the *third* Indian age, and to reduce it to a near conformity with the Greek chronology of Scripture. M. Bailly's account of the Hindu ages is as follows.

The Indians count 17 ages from the birth of Brama; we are in the 18th.—The first 14 ages amount to “mille cinquante millions d'années:” in figures 1050,000,000 of years. These are evidently fabulous. The last four ages are those which chiefly fall under consideration, and according to these the world is to last 4,320,000 years, according to the following division;

The first age	. . . . .	1,728,000 years.
The second	. . . . .	1,296,000 . .
The third	. . . . .	864,000 . .
The fourth	. . . . .	432,000 . .

These are the chronological extravagances which M. le Gentil confesses he at first disdained to meddle with. The two first M. Bailly thinks fabulous; but the third he is disposed to admit as real, subject to such reductions, as the custom of distant ages seems fully to authorize. No case seems more determined than that the ancients had *years* of all lengths and descriptions; of

of two weeks or fifteen days, half a month—of one, or two months; six months, &c. or thirty, and sixty days, &c. All these were known in India, particularly that of the fortnight, or dark and bright halves of the moon: indeed both DAY and YEAR, we are assured, in India, mean no more than the *Saros* of the Chaldæans, viz. a *revolution*.

I have observed, that M. Bailly gives up the two first ages as fabulous; it is only the *third* and *fourth* that he meddles with, and the *third* which he labours to *establish*; for the fourth, or Kali Yug, is generally admitted to be the current age from the flood. His aim is to shew that the Hindus are not without historical records, which might justify the chronology he contends for. But it must be recollected, that when M. Bailly, or any other person, is so ready to give up an extravagant computation, merely because it seems so; if the Scripture account of the creation of the world is not true, no reason appears for considering such a duration of ages as either imaginary or exaggerated; for the great question is, whether the world is of the age Moses assigns to it, or of *immense antiquity*, if not even *eternal*. We are not enquiring into a difference merely of days or years, or even centuries; not how long a patriarch lived, or a king reigned: but when the world was first inhabited, when destroyed, and when re-peopled. These are epochs to be determined out of an infinity of time; for if the Bible is not true, Infidels acknowledge no precise limits to the duration of the earth, and some still contend for its eternity. As different nations however are known to have adopted a variety of years, not solar and lunar only, but hebdomadal and diurnal, if I may so say; years of weeks, and days; we certainly appear, by a due examination into their modes of reckoning, if not to get a key capable of opening all their mysteries, yet one which may enable us to reduce many of their extravagances upon pretty certain grounds, and by comparison to discover what is clearly artificial from what may be real. I have already mentioned in the Discourse, the method adopted for adjusting the accounts of Callisthenes and Epigenes; a circumstance to which M. Bailly particularly alludes in his *Indian Astronomy*,

and which is certainly a very good instance of the means that should be adopted for reducing the extravagant accounts of antiquity: but I think it may be most manifestly shewn, that many computations of the ancients have either no connection at all with history, or are so manifestly artificial as to allow us to be very indifferent about the real value and importance of such reckonings as *seem* to exceed the Bible chronology, but which have no historical records to support them.

If I refer chiefly to the authority of M. Bailly upon this occasion, it is for the following reasons: first, that his talents and ingenuity are universally acknowledged; secondly, that his testimony on the side of Scripture is the more valuable from his known heterodoxy upon other occasions; and thirdly, because, as he had in this instance a favourite point to establish, we may reasonably suppose, that he has made all he could make of the historical records of India. In his Preliminary Discourse then prefixed to his *Traité de l'Astronomie Indienne et Orientale*, the reader will find some of the most curious chronological computations of antiquity brought into such an agreement as is certainly very surprising, and the more to be attended to, because, whatever M. Bailly's notions at other times were, concerning the peopling of the globe, and the progress of arts and sciences, he was here certainly proceeding upon what he held to be an undoubted *fact*; namely, that the positions of the sun and moon in 3102 A. C. were derived from actual observation. He acknowledges that the observation is "affectée d'une erreur" "que nous ne pouvons apprécier qu'en connoissant la" "manière d'observer de ces anciens peuples." However the fact he himself fully believes to have been so, and that this observation was further connected with a previous one, as I stated before. He allows the observation was not difficult to make, but that it appears to be authentic and original, because, had the Indians only borrowed or adopted it, they must have adopted other things with it, as the obliquity of the ecliptic, &c. &c. which is not the case. But M. Bailly could not but be aware, that *any historical* record in support of such an epoch would be more satisfactory, than the mere fact of so remote an observation standing alone. He does not  
admit

admit indeed, that the one would be *more decisive* than the other, (though, in searching for historical records, he *tacitly*, at least, allows this:) but he observes, “Si l’on “trouvoit un *manuscrit Indien*, où il fût dit *expressément* “que l’an 3102 avant notre ère au minuit entre le 17 “et le 18 Février, les Brame ont observé la lune dans “10° 6° 0’, et le soleil dans 10° 3° 38’ 13”, il n’y auroit “pas lieu d’en douter: il seroit évident que cette dé- “termination seroit une observation. Eh bien, ce que “les Indiens ne disent pas, se dérive *directement* de “leurs Tables.”

But we must confess, if it can be supposed possible that such epochs might have been assumed, which Mr. Marsden and Mr. Bentley seem assured of, the want of any historical records of those times would lead us at once to question the antiquity and originality of the very Tables, in which the observation appears. M. Bailly however has spared no pains to discover historical records corroborative of his supposition; and as his purpose would be answered by establishing the existence of the 3d as well as of the 4th Hindu age, he labours to do this, and with great ingenuity; which, though it may not have been altogether successful, is, I think, very instructive: for from thence we learn, that, among all the most known nations of antiquity, there was a sort of agreement in dates, and revolutions, and cycles, which was really most extraordinary: in dynasties also, and many other particulars. (See *Faber’s Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. 125, 126. and *Goguet’s Orig. of Arts and Sciences*, vol. iii. 325.) M. Bailly fixes upon the families of the sun and moon, that is, the dynasties of *Surga-bans* and *Chandra-bans*, as the antediluvian inhabitants of the world; which he compares with the Peris of the Persians, whom he would also rescue from the gulph of non-entity, and the demi-gods of Egypt. The utmost he claims for them all is, that they should be considered cotemporary during the third Indian age, which he conceives to have consisted of lunar years; and which he reduces to 2400 solar years; which added to 3102, the date of the Kali Yug preceding our æra, make together 5502. And according to Chioniadès and Chrysococca, whom he cites, the Persians, it seems, carried back the year of the world to 5507; a proof, says M. Bailly, of their being derived from the same source. Certainly the conformity

is curious. M. Bailly concludes that the Kali Yug was the beginning of the Hindu reckoning by solar years; and he thinks the princes of the races of the sun and moon were possibly designed to signify those who reckoned by lunar and solar years respectively. But here seems to be an inconsistency; for if the computation by solar years only commenced with the Kali Yug, how can the children of the sun be carried back to the third age? a circumstance of some moment, because it is one point with M. Bailly to prove their correspondence with the reign assigned to the *sun* in Egypt, of 30,000 years; which, upon reduction into lunar years, agree nearly with the 3d Hindu age, in which the *children* of the *sun* are said to have reigned. The Egyptians indeed do appear to have reckoned by lunar years or months before the flood; and this serves to reconcile their account with the computation of the LXX, and the Chaldæan reckoning: (see *Jackson's Chronological Antiquities*;) but I question whether the same may be said of the third Hindu age; because the term assigned to it by M. Bailly, in solar years, multiplied by 360, makes exactly 864,000; but 864,000 divided by 28, leaves a fraction: so that the third age would surely appear to have consisted of years of *days*, like all the others. M. Bailly himself makes this reduction of the several ages, and the result becomes curious, from another conformity, which *must* be considered as in one instance at least fabulous; for the products of the four ages severally, divided by 360, amounts in all to exactly 12,000, which is the very period assigned by the Persians for the duration of the world, which *they* also divide into four quarters or ages. To make this evident, we must understand that to every Hindu age an interval was assigned of different lengths; to the 1st one of 800 years, to the 2d 600, to the 3d 400, and to the 4th 200. The ages with their intervals are in solar years of 360 days each,

1st	4800.	. . . . .	in days	. . .	1,728,000.
2d	3600.	. . . . .			1,296,000.
3d	2400.	. . . . .			864,000.
4th	1200.	. . . . .			432,000.
	<u>12000.</u>				<u>4,320,000.</u>

Now as the conjecture of the Persians concerning the duration



duration of the world *must have been* merely fanciful, so in all likelihood were the Hindu ages ; as well as numerous other computations with which the world has been amused. For though M. Bailly contends for the reality of only the 3d and 4th ages, the two first might almost as reasonably be insisted on ; for the kings of heaven and kings of earth in the Chinese annals are said to have reigned altogether exactly 432,000 years, which is not only the amount of the 4th Indian age, but multiplied by 7 (the days in a week) produces 3024,000 days, which is exactly the number of days in the two first Indian ages, and which, M. Bailly says, agrees with the two first Chinese races of Tien-hoang, and Ti-hoang, and with the Dives of the Persians ; as the third Chinese race of Gin-hoang agrees with the third Hindu age and the Peris of the Persians : so that, considering M. Bailly's general opinion concerning the age of the globe, we may reasonably suppose, that though, in his Preliminary Discourse to the Treatise on Indian Astronomy, he professes to set aside the two first Indian ages as fabulous, he would have been under no difficulty to have found vouchers for their reality, had he chosen it ; though nothing can tend more to prove the fabulousness and contrivance of the whole, than the above numerical coincidences, whatever may have been the origin of them, and the cause of their agreement. The fact seems to be, that beyond the Mosaic æra they are clearly fabulous and artificial, though all of them may perhaps have been *contrived* and founded upon traditions concerning both the antediluvian and postdiluvian state of the globe : for M. Bailly has certainly most ingeniously reduced many ancient accounts to a near conformity with the Greek and Samaritan chronology of Scripture, though the numbers by which they reckoned, and the unexpected results that arise in many instances from the resolution and comparison of those numbers, must still induce us to suppose they were not strictly historical, but in most instances fanciful and superstitious. Berossus's 120 Sari, which he says preceded the deluge, at 3600 years a Saros, amount to 432,000 years. This then agrees with the Chinese and with the Hindus, but it is not the number of the *third*, but of the *fourth* Hindu age ; it is not antediluvian, but

but postdiluvian. This number M. le Gentil tells us represents in India a certain number of revolutions of the equinox at 54 seconds a year. *Mémoires de l'Acad.* 1782. The Chinese again say, that the heavens were 10800 years forming: now 10800 is the amount of the three first Hindu ages in solar years, with the intervals. Here then is a conformity scarcely to be considered as accidental. Again, by the Persian account the earth is given to the *Dives* for 7000 years prior to the birth of Adam, and then succeeded the *Peris* for 2000 years: now the 7000 years agree with the two first Hindu ages without the intervals, and the 2000 with the third Hindu age in the same manner. I have not taken notice of Mr. Bentley's remark, that the cyphers were added to the Hindu ages to convert them into poetic years; which the reader will find in the 5th vol of the Asiatic Researches; though this must certainly contribute to shew how arbitrary and fanciful they must be, and how little they have to do with real history; at least beyond a certain period: for as the Kali Yug is clearly the current *postdiluvian* age of the world, I would by no means pretend to say that the third Hindu age is not quite as respectable, as a chronological period, as the Egyptian or Chaldæan dynasties, or the period assigned by Abugiafar to the *Peris*, which M. Bailly has made so much of. My only idea upon the subject is, that the traditions concerning the true chronology of the globe, both antediluvian and postdiluvian, are at the bottom of all the extravagant computations of the ancients; that they have preserved what is true, in a *form* more artificial than can be consistent with the history itself; that they have in many instances carried them back beyond the æra of the creation, through what M. Bailly calls "le goût du *merveilleux*," and perhaps in the way of rivalry, of which they have all been accused; and that many are entirely astronomical, and, as Mr. Bryant says of Manetho's famous cycle of 36525, belong rather to an ephemeris, than to true history.

Numberless have been the attempts to resolve the number just alluded to; perhaps Mr. Bryant's is as simple as any: it was the amount, he says, of the days in a cycle of 100 years; for if one year consists of 365  
days

days and one fourth, in one hundred years they would make exactly 36525. Syncellus's account is, that it was the multiplication of 1461 by 25, or the two great cycles of the sun and moon multiplied into each other, which completes the revolution of the Zodiac by the reckoning of the Egyptians and Grecians. M. Freret's explanation of Syncellus's account he himself thinks original. He tells us the Egyptians divided their Zodiac into 365 degrees; the number of the days in their year: but as the year was a quarter of a day shorter than the true solar year, they added 36500 quarters of a day, or 25 years, to their period, for the greater exactness. See *Marsham* upon this curious number; *Shuckford's Connection*, b. i. and *Jackson's Chronological Antiquities*. Jamblichus, it is well known, makes the writings of Hermes amount to this very sum of 36525; which might alone serve to shew how little it had to do with real history.

I have endeavoured to express myself as clearly as I could, upon this curious point of Hindu chronology; because, as it is supposed to involve a real fact, and a real epoch, I think it the best view that can be taken of the Hindu chronology. For the solution of the mythological and astronomical intricacies of the system, I must refer at once to the writings of Sir William Jones, Mr. Wilford, Mr. Wilkins, Mr. Davis, Mr. Bentley, and Mr. Maurice. M. Bailly's endeavour to authenticate the existence of the third Hindu age, appears to have brought out some curious facts in the history of the world; and though the precise limits assigned to the *fourth*, or *current* age, must shew how much of conjecture and fancy there must be at the bottom of their computations; yet it is well to know what is admitted to be fabulous, and what is the result of such reductions and comparisons with the annals of other nations, as M. Bailly thought it worth his while to enter into. These I shall now state in his own words; for the calculations on which he relies, I must refer to the work itself. "La durée du troisième âge  
 " Indien est appuyée sur la durée correspondante de cet  
 " intervalle donné de 2222 ans par les Chaldéens,"  
 (i. e. 120 Sari, according to Suidas,) " et de 2256 ans  
 " par Joseph et les Septante. Si l'on joint à ces deux  
 " témoig-

“ témoignages ceux qui résultent des 30,000 années du  
 “ regne du soleil en Egypte, et les 2000 ans du regne  
 “ des Perses en Perse, on verra que l’existence et la du-  
 “ rée du troisième âge Indien sont établis sur les anti-  
 “ quités des six plus anciennes nations du monde, sa-  
 “ voir, les Chinois, les Indiens, les Perses, les Egyp-  
 “ tiens, les Chaldéens, et les Hébreux; et on aura, sui-  
 “ vant ces différens peuples, un tableau des différentes  
 “ durées qu’ils donnent à cet intervalle, en exceptant  
 “ les Chinois, qui semblent en avoir conservé la mé-  
 “ moire, et non la chronologie.

“ Les Septante - - - 2256 ans<sup>a</sup>.

“ Les Chaldéens - - - 2222.

“ Les Egyptiens, regne du soleil - 2340.

“ Les Perses, regne des Perses - 2000.

“ Avec l’intervalle Indien - - 2400.

“ Les Indiens, troisième âge. Race du soleil 2000.

“ Avec l’intervalle - - 2400.

“ Par les 78 générations - - 2340.

“ Il nous semble donc démontré, autant que les faits  
 “ de cette haute antiquité peuvent l’être, qu’il y a eu  
 “ un intervalle semblable à celui que nos livres saints  
 “ comptent entre la création et le déluge, dont les  
 “ Chinois, les Indiens, les Perses, les Egyptiens, et les  
 “ Chaldéens ont conservé la mémoire; non-seulement  
 “ la mémoire de son existence, mais celle de sa durée,  
 “ et avec une certaine conformité, en admettant, comme  
 “ cela est vraisemblable, que ces différentes nations  
 “ partent de différentes époques.” *De l’Astronomie In-  
 dienne et Orientale; Discours Préliminaire, Part II. pp.*  
*cxxvi. cxxvii.*

I am not myself intending to prove the existence of the third Hindu age, or to give being to the dynasties of the sun and moon, which have much more reasonably, perhaps, been concluded to be only solar and lunar cycles: but supposing them to have been historical, and that the observations in the Tables of Tiryalour were really of the remote age attributed to them, still, so far from their being in contradiction to the holy

<sup>a</sup> There are computations existing, (see note, p. 222,) which come within two of M. Bailly’s computation, and which he seems to have been unacquainted with.

Scriptures, they seem exactly to carry us back to the patriarchal ages, in which astronomy has always been supposed to be particularly cultivated, and of which times many profane nations seem to have preserved a certain sort of chronology, much resembling what M. Bailly has conceived of the third Hindu age; that is, mixed with fable, and requiring reductions and other arrangements; but thus indeed being capable of being brought into a near agreement with the computation of the Septuagint, Josephus, and the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch. Beyond this nothing seems at all to be known or discovered; and *this is much further* than the ablest Orientalists will admit, that we have any true history: Sir William Jones's summary of the whole matter being, "that the two following propositions be considered as indubitably established; that the *three* first ages of the Hindus are chiefly mythological, whether their mythology was founded on the dark enigmas of their astronomers, or the heroic fictions of their poets; and that the fourth or historical age cannot be carried back farther than 2000 years before Christ; that whatever be the comparative antiquity of the Hindu Scriptures, we may safely conclude, that the Mosaic and Indian chronologies are perfectly consistent; that Menu, son of Brahmá, was the Adima, or first created mortal, and consequently our Adam." See *Sir William Jones's Works*, vol. i. pp. 309. 326.

The commencement of the Kali Yug, by every reckoning, comes near to the Septuagint chronology of the flood; nearer to the Samaritan; and if 3102, which is the epoch M. Bailly and M. Freret assign to it, be at all right, coincides exactly with Josephus, for that is the very term of years he reckons from the flood to the Christian æra; and that every Hindu age is supposed to terminate with a deluge, is well known. As to the difference between the Greek and Hebrew chronology of the Scriptures, it seems to be a point that never can be adequately settled: but I apprehend no man's faith in the main articles of the sacred history will ever be shaken by the differences subsisting. There is something singular, however, in the suspicions that have been formed on the subject; for while some have  
sup-

supposed, that the Egyptian and Chaldean dynasties were framed to invalidate the chronology of the Septuagint, which happened to appear at the same time, (see *Origines Sacræ*, p. 29.) others have apprehended, that the Seventy extended the Hebrew account, in order to put the Jews upon a par with the Egyptians and Chaldæans; though indeed a few centuries were but a very inadequate addition for this purpose. Those who are curious in this matter must consult the authors who have written expressly upon this subject, as *Baronius*, and *Vossius*, *Pezron*, and *le Quien*; and they will find a very good account of the controversy, under the article *Chronologie*, in the *Dictionnaire des Arts et des Sciences*. The Preface to the 8vo. edition of the *Universal History*, 1747, should also by all means be consulted, where is a table drawn up from *Strauchius*, *Chevreau* and others, of the different computations of time between the creation and birth of Christ, as adopted by various authors. *Mr. Jackson's Chronological Antiquities* are entirely in defence of the Greek chronology; to a conformity with which he very ingeniously reduces the Egyptian and Chaldæan records. Attempts have been made also, as in all other instances, to settle this controverted point in chronology by the aid of astronomy. See *Bedford's Scripture Chronology demonstrated by Astronomical Calculations*.

But whatever becomes of the question, the great and most important truths of the holy Scriptures cannot be affected by it; the creation, the fall of man, the destruction of the world, &c. &c. And if any profane accounts shall seem to be nearly in agreement with the Greek chronology, it is, I think, as much as can be required or expected. There is one observation I cannot forbear to make with respect to the Indian Tables. *M. Bailly* is very unwilling to admit, that the missionaries could have any concern with them; and he particularly draws an argument to this purpose from the circumstance of the Indian Tables of mean motions agreeing nearest with *Cassini's*, which did not exist in 1687, when the Siam Tables certainly did. If, says he, the missionaries communicated the European astronomy to Asia, they could in 1687 only have known the Tables of *Tycho*, *Riccioli*, *Copernicus*, *Bouillard*, *Kepler*, *Lomontanus*,

montanus, or the Tables of Alphonfus. He also says, that the Indian astronomy differs in so many points from all others, that it must have been original. P. lxxv. Now it is somewhat remarkable, that in M. Bailly's Tables of comparison, Tycho Brahe's Table of mean motions comes the nearest but one to the Indian Table; and at p. xii. M. Bailly notices it as a remarkable thing, that in the Narfapur Tables an annual inequality is attributed to the moon, similar to what Tycho Brahe had discovered: an inequality not known at Alexandria, or in Arabia. It is well known, that the Chinese Tables occasioned similar surprise, till Cassini and Picard discovered their extraordinary agreement with the Tables of Tycho Brahe; and upon questioning Father Couplet, (who was a very sincere man,) he acknowledged, that his brethren had reformed the Chinese Tables by them. See *Renaudot on Chinese Learning*; who adds, that he had heard the same from Couplet's own mouth. Couplet went to China in 1650, and returned in 1680.

As to the motive alleged by M. Bailly for preferring the epoch of 3102, because of the supposed conjunction of the planets, it seems trifling, and rather to resemble some fanciful methods of fixing the epoch of the creation; two of which, as not unsuitable to the subject of this note, occur to me at this moment. The one to prove the truth of the Hebrew, the other of the Greek chronology of Scripture. "A remarkable astronomical epoch," says M. la Place, in his *Traité du Mécanique céleste*, Paris, 1802, "is that in which the great axis of the terrestrial orbit coincided with the line of the equinoxes; for then the true and mean equinoxes were united. I find, by the preceding formulas, that this phenomenon took place towards the year 4004 before Christ, a period at which the majority of our chronologists place the creation of the world." The author of the other I know not; but his argument is drawn from the revolutions of the great comet which appeared in 1680, and whose period was determined by Sir Isaac Newton to be 575 years: and he makes out, that, according to the Greek chronology, (I know not which computation he could adopt,) twelve revolutions would exactly have been completed in 1680,

as well as 230 revolutions of Saturn, 575 of Jupiter, and 3600 of Mars. Such are the results of retrospective enquiries after astronomical epochs, and which may possibly have been the very way adopted to fix the commencement of the Indian Kali Yug. But this I pretend not to decide: if the epoch of the Tirvalour Tables was derived from actual observation, it is certainly very extraordinary; but we may not pronounce it impossible. According to some computations, and even according to Dr. Grabe's Septuagint, 144 years might then have elapsed after the deluge. M. Bailly confesses it was not a difficult observation; and as to the want of instruments, even Tycho Brahe had no assistance from the telescope. The science of astronomy, to a certain degree, was probably of the first importance; and the invitation to the study of it great in those eastern climates, where, as Sir Robert Barker tells us, in his curious paper on the observatory of *Benares*, "without  
 " the assistance of optical glasses, the Bramins have an  
 " advantage unexperienced by the observers of more  
 " northern climates. The serenity and clearness of the  
 " atmosphere in the night-time in the East Indies, ex-  
 " cept at the seasons of changing the monsoons, is dif-  
 " ficult to express to those who have not seen it, be-  
 " cause we have nothing in comparison to form our  
 " ideas upon. It is clear to perfection; a total qui-  
 " etude subsists; scarcely a cloud to be seen; and the  
 " light of the heavens, by the numerous appearance of  
 " stars, affords a prospect both of wonder and contem-  
 " plation." *Philosophical Transactions*, 1777.

I shall conclude this long, and I fear tedious note, with the following passage from an old translation of a work of the celebrated Amyraut. "Furthermore,  
 " whereas it was well said by one, that things of great-  
 " est antiquity are best; and the philosophers them-  
 " selves, when they treat concerning God and religion,  
 " extremely cry up antiquity, and attribute much to  
 " the dictates of their ancestors; as if nature itself had  
 " suggested to them, that there was a source of all  
 " these things, from which they that were nearest it  
 " drew the purest and sincerest waters; whereas, accord-  
 " ingly as they are derived through several minds, as so  
 " many several conduit-pipes, they become corrupted  
 " and



“and tinged with extraneous qualities, and contract  
“impurity. If there be found a doctrine, that has all  
“the marks of antiquity, and there appears nothing in  
“the world that equals it, it ought not to be doubted,  
“but that the same proceeded from him that is  
“more ancient than all, as being author of all things.  
“If the language in which it was revealed be as the  
“mother and flock, from which others, though very  
“ancient, are sprung; if it describes the history of the  
“world, and of men, and their propagation upon the  
“earth; if it affords the demonstration of times, and  
“that without it the knowledge of chronology would  
“be more intricate than a labyrinth; if it deduces its  
“history from point to point with an exact correspond-  
“ence; if it clearly and certainly relates histories, that  
“are as the body of the fabulous shadows that we see  
“in the writings of the most ancient authors in the  
“world; who will doubt, but all which they have is  
“taken from thence, and that we ought to refer what  
“is therein depraved and corrupted thereunto, as to  
“its principle, and have recourse thither to learn what  
“we are ignorant of? If there be found a religion,  
“all whole parts accord together with an admirable  
“harmony, although it has been propounded at several  
“times, and by several persons in several places; if  
“there be a discipline, a doctrine, a book, a society,  
“in which God himself speaks to men in a style and  
“manner agreeable to the eminence of his majesty,  
“displays his justice to them most terrible in its ap-  
“pearance, discovers his power in its highest magnifi-  
“cence, and gives them to sound the breadth and  
“length, depth and height of his infinite mercies;  
“lastly, if examples of an incomparable virtue be found  
“therein, with incitations and instructions to piety;  
“such as are not to be paralleled any other where in  
“the world; ’tis an indubitable argument, that they  
“are proceeded from some other than the human  
“mind, or the school of MAN!”



---

## S E R M O N VI.

---

PSALM XC. 2.

*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made; thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.*

**H**AVING in my last Discourse taken a general view of the chronology of the world, as far as it appears capable of being ascertained, from our present knowledge of the *history of man*; I propose in this Discourse to consider what it has been judged possible to collect concerning it, from a *physical examination* of the *earth itself*.

In what manner the natural history of the earth has been resorted to, for proofs either against or in support of Revelation, will be best understood from a brief view of the present state of the several questions that have arisen upon the subject.

And first, there are still many who object entirely to the Scripture account of the formation of the earth; they think it altogether unphilosophical, as well as unbefitting the majesty of God. They think the six days' operations a limitation of God's power, as far as the Deity only is concerned; and quite inadequate to the production of such a mass, if every thing is to be referred to the operation of secondary causes, (which they generally pretend,) to which, for want of any means of actual measurement, they are in the habit of assigning whatever *time* they please; for time is inexhaustible. Some will not admit of any beginning at all; while others contend for a multiplicity, indeed an infinity of revolutions; and suppose, that we are only tenants for a time, of a mansion, the materials of which at least have already endured for ages without limit. All these invent and promulgate their different theories at pleasure; and as it is the constant practice to begin with setting aside all preceding systems, we have, as it were, a new one every day.

Other geologists there are, who confine their views more to the period and to the  
pheno-

phenomena of the deluge, as recorded by Moses ; and though these in their objections generally run into the same extravagances in regard to the high antiquity of the globe, yet they are contented to set aside the catastrophe of the deluge ; believing, with some reason, that with *this*, the other parts of the relation will fall of course.

Now of these several objectors and opponents of Revelation, to some the reply generally made is, that the Scripture account of the creation is no fit subject for philosophical speculation : that it was not designed to be a philosophical, but a *miraculous* account, independent of the *common* course and operation of all secondary causes. And this surely is the most reasonable reply that can be made (<sup>1</sup>). Others, however, oppose to these adverse theories, theories of their own, either rendered conformable to, or else regularly deduced, as they think, from the very words of Scripture. These have great scope for their speculations ; and however unsatisfactory and unphilosophical many of them may appear, they are at least as ingenious as any others, and seem at least to have, in the very words of Scripture, (what the rest cer-

tainly want,) some sure foundation to support them.

It is thus that one very eminent naturalist, and very pious Christian (<sup>2</sup>), who has particularly distinguished himself by his zealous endeavours to stem the torrent of modern infidelity, has supposed that, consistently with the description of Moses, the arrangement of the chaos could only have commenced with the introduction of some active principle among the other elementary materials, capable of producing what he calls a state of *liquidity*; and this principle, upon philosophical grounds, he conceives to have been that first grand display of *light*, spoken of in the Genesis, as proceeding, not from any physical source or cause whatsoever, but solely from the power and will of God.

This introduction of light into the chaotic mass is made the beginning of a course of *successive* and distinct operations, which *seems to be* absolutely necessary to account for the present structure of the globe, though too generally overlooked; for which, if we are to find a philosophical reason, it must surely, in many instances, point to the process of chemical precipitation from a fluid, the  
 . most

most uncertain of all operations to judge of, as a *past* event; and this, if the conjecture of the writer alluded to does not serve to explain it, may surely be expected to baffle every enquiry of modern theorists. The basis of our globe most undoubtedly must have owed its arrangement to some causes not now operating: to speak philosophically, the chaos, which seems to be universally admitted in some way or other, was probably a more complex *menstruum* than any that has ever since existed<sup>a</sup>; and the operations that took place in it, besides being especially directed by the will of God, as the first disposer of all secondary causes, must have depended upon a variety of circumstances, of which we are now quite incapable of judging. This is not only acknowledged by some of the most eminent naturalists of the present age, but might, one would think, be obvious to every person at all acquainted

<sup>a</sup> Anaxagoras says, before the Næs, or God, set things in order, πάντα χρήματα ἦν ὁμῶς πεφυγμένα, *all things were confused together*. And Anaximander called the sea, τῆς πρώτης ὑγρασίας λείψανον, *the remainder of the primitive moisture*. See also the ΘΕΟΓΟΝΙΑ of Hesiod, and Ovid. *Metam.* lib. i. Homer calls the ocean, Γένεσις πάντεσσι. Il. xiv. 246.

with chemistry, and the extraordinary effects flowing from every possible mixture of heterogeneous matters. Whoever knows any thing of the great and incomprehensible variety producible by the elective attractions of different substances acting freely in some common menstruum, and the many different accidents by which such attractions may be influenced, set in motion, retarded or accelerated, could scarcely, one would imagine, presume to determine, that the circumstances either of the solid or fluid parts of the globe were at the period of their first arrangement the same as at present: and till this is ascertained to a certainty, notwithstanding every help we may have derived from the advancement of knowledge, all our speculations concerning *past* transactions must be in the greatest degree vague and hypothetical. (<sup>3</sup>)

But though this is most undoubtedly the case, yet the very rapid progress lately made in those two particular branches of natural philosophy, mineralogy and chemistry, has led many to suppose, that the times are peculiarly favourable for such enquiries and speculations (<sup>4</sup>). And *Reason* has been busily



fly at work, to apply these new discoveries to the fabric of the earth; and in an avowed disregard of Revelation, to account philosophically for its origin, its first arrangement, and its present condition and appearances. Had not such speculations already led many to abandon their belief of the revealed account of the creation of the earth, and eventually also of some of the most important truths of our most holy religion, I should be among the first to think such discussions unfit for the pulpit. But as physics have thus been forced into connection with theology, it may be well to review the Mosaic account, in the face of these new discoveries, and at the same time to compare it with one at least of the most modern theories of human Reason. I shall begin with the latter.

Among the several theories strictly *philosophical* and *rational*, (that is, according to the present acceptation of those terms, entirely independent of Revelation,) and in which all the new discoveries in mineralogy, chemistry, and meteorology are made the most of, I shall select one, which has recently appeared on the continent, as being  
in

in some measure founded on the conjecture of one of the most admired foreign Naturalists of the age. According to this theory then we are to conceive, that our planet is a fragment of the sun ; detached by the shock of a comet, and drawn back to and detained in its present orbit by the force of the sun's attraction : that this fragment was detached in a highly *ignited* state, from its parent mass, which is concluded to be, from its *most obvious* effects, a *mass of fire*. This fragment is supposed to form the *nucleus* of our globe, and to have brought with it the vaporous atmosphere of the comet, with which it was enveloped ; and by means of which it became incruited in time, by the deposition of the earthy particles originally held in solution. I need not, I am sure, detain you with an account of the author's hypotheses, as to the several chemical operations that ensued, which he regularly traces, from the first motions and combinations of the several substances, fixed and volatile, to the composition and arrangement of our principal strata. The sum and substance of the whole really is, that this theory is not only contrary to some of the first  
princi-

principles of geometry and mechanics, but involves in it the notion of the sun's being a *solid mass of fire* ; which has been lately shewn to be highly improbable, if not decidedly false, by many truly scientific experiments and observations ; and thirdly, it depends on the vain assumption, that the true method of the composition of our mineral substances is capable of being ascertained, though no such analysis has been at all effectual, to the enabling us, in any one instance, to produce such substances, by any mixture of the assigned ingredients. (<sup>5</sup>)

This may serve, I think, as one specimen at least of the application which Reason would make of the new discoveries in physics, to frame a world ! if not in direct opposition to the Mosaic account of the creation, yet manifestly in contempt of it.

Let us then turn to the Scripture account, and see what that really is.

Not rash, or vain, or absurd enough to pretend to know the specific causes, that operated physically in the first production of this world, Moses, in *his* relation of events, is at once pious, rational, and majestically sublime. It was *his* duty and office to record

cord the *act* of creation ; not to meddle with the *mode* of it : to tell us that God *made* the world, not *how* he made it<sup>b</sup>.

An eminent Sceptic has observed, with reference particularly to the sacred writers, “ that there is no greater temptation to a  
“ man to transgress the bounds of strict  
“ truth, than to have the credit of being a  
“ missionary, prophet, or embassador from  
“ heaven<sup>c</sup>.” Had Moses then been unduly influenced by any such temptation, why did he not suppose, that those to whom he addressed himself would expect him to disclose more to them than he attempts to tell? why did he not pretend to be let more deeply into the secret, as every Pagan mythologist, every ancient philosopher, and above all, every modern theorist has constantly done? Why do we not read, in *his* account, of the

<sup>b</sup> Ὁ μὲν γε περὶ τῆς κτίσεως ἡμῖν διαλεχθεὶς, τοσούτον ἡμᾶς ἐδίδαξεν, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν· ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος· ἐξαρκεῖν ἡγούμενος τὸν ποιήσαντα αὐτὴν καὶ διακοσμήσαντα διαγγεῖλαι—τίς δὲ ἡ οὐσία ταύτης περιεργάζεσθαι, ὡς μάταιον καὶ ἀνωφελὲς τοῖς ἀνέμοι παρητήσατο. *Basil. advers. Eunom. lib. i. 238.* edit. Steph. See also *Philoponus περὶ Κοσμοποιΐας, κ. α.* where are some excellent remarks to the purpose.

<sup>c</sup> Hume.

jumble of atoms, the combinations and oppositions of the dry and the humid, the hot and the cold? why do we not read of the prolific virtues of the sun eliciting living creatures from the turbid chaos<sup>d</sup>? Why is there so little said of second causes<sup>(e)</sup> in this particular part of the Mosaic records, but for this express reason, that secondary causes themselves were then to receive their origin, and to have their first principles of motion impressed upon them? for in other parts of the Pentateuch it is thought to be no derogation from the majesty of God, to describe him as operating by the intervention of secondary causes. This is a point of singular correctness in the history of Moses, which no mythologist, no merely human writer, has attended to. All secondary causes are peculiarly shut out, as they should be, where the Spirit of God must necessarily have been the sole cause of motion, and of all the operations that then took place. We particularly read of the earth bringing forth grass, and other vegetable productions, be-

<sup>d</sup> See *Cudworth*, and *Universal History*, vol. i. and *Dr. Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, Letter xxx.

fore the sun was appointed to spread abroad his rays : and as to the production of fowls and fishes, cattle and creeping things, and even man, the Lord of all ; no secondary cause, in either case, that could be naturally adequate or applicable, is assigned ; but the fowls are made from the water, and man from the dust of the ground.

Is this account irreconcilable to Reason ? What is it then that it tells us ? Not that the world is eternal, which only a few of the ancient, and very few modern philosophers have ventured to maintain ; but that “ in the beginning God created the heavens “ and the earth ; ” let this expression, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language, express more or less. That this creation was out of nothing, seems plainly to be implied<sup>c</sup> by the next circumstance related of the earth, namely, that its first creation

<sup>c</sup> Chalcidius, in his *Commentaries on Plato's Timæus*, draws the same conclusion from this expression. See him cited by Bp. Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae*, b. iii. ch. 2. 278. See also *Barrow's Sermons*, vol. ii. Sermon. XII. §. 7. and *Theodore's Hist.* lib. i. c. 19. where is a curious argument to the purpose. Bufson has made use of this interval between the creation of matter and production of light.

was destitute of order, mere matter : “ And “ the earth was without form, and void.” As to the subsequent reduction of it into order, and successive creation of plants and animals from the fowls of the air to mankind ; to deny the possibility of it is absurd, and to question the probability, a mere impertinence. For why might not the creation be effected by successive acts ? and why not in a given time ? As for the distinct periods specified, and the proportional differences in the productions of the six days, it is enough to assert, what Reason cannot controvert, that to an omnipotent and eternal Being there can be no limitations in regard to time or modes of acting, but what are entirely dependent on his own supreme will. To Him undoubtedly a thousand years are but as a day. He might make the world in a moment, in a day, in six days, in six thousand days ; he might have made only plants on one day, and feathered fowl on another, and creeping things and beasts on another ; or he might have made every thing in one day, by his almighty fiat.

Had Moses pretended to give an account of the primary qualities of matter, and the several

several processes by which the body of this earth obtained to be what it is ; we might well have supposed his account to be fabulous, merely from these two considerations : first, that no knowledge of such processes being to be derived from tradition, or deduced by argument, we could only know them from Revelation ; and secondly, the revelation of such matters would be altogether superfluous, being wholly void of use. We do not need to know, nor could we therefore reasonably expect to be informed, of the exact primary modifications and motions of matter, by which the world acquired its present form : but to know that God created the very matter whereof it is formed, and that his divine Spirit reduced things to the order in which we now behold them, and even that this came to pass in *six* days, are all points of extreme use and importance ; establishing God's omnipotence and self-existence in the fullest manner, and laying the best and surest foundation for the observance of the Sabbath. In regard to which latter circumstance, it must be remarked, that we have here, and no where else, a regular historical record of the *hebdomadal*



*madal* division of time ; which is now, and was in the earliest ages, by all accounts, so very generally adopted. It has been lately said, that the Indians *must* have communicated this subdivision of time, which was exactly the fourth part of their month of twenty-eight days, to the western parts of the world ; and consequently, that *we* also derive it from thence<sup>f</sup> ; and the remarkable coincidence of the names of the days of the week, and the circumstance of their being respectively dedicated to the same deities and planets, is alleged as the proof of this. But there can be no doubt, that as Christians we derive it solely from the books of Moses ; and the adoption of the names of the days, though, for what we know, derived, as they allege, from the East (<sup>g</sup>), has been entirely accidental. Moses either wrote before such names had been given to the days of the week, or subsequently. If he wrote previously, then there is no reason to doubt of his account being the true one ; if subsequently, and he wrote only from his own

<sup>f</sup> *Bailly, Histoire de l'Astronomie Indienne et Orientale. Discours Préliminaire.*

inventions, or borrowed what he wrote, as has been insinuated, it must be granted, that, instead of adopting, it is most likely he would particularly have rejected a division, which must have appeared to give such countenance to the most prevailing idolatry of those times. The hebdomadal division, though originally of divine institution<sup>g</sup>), might very probably, from the mere coincidence of numbers<sup>g</sup>, have led afterwards to the *planetary* distinction of the days<sup>h</sup>, among a people who had fallen off from the worship of the true God; and, as Maimonides reports of the Chaldæans, would acknowledge no other Gods but the stars, to whom they made images and statues: to the *sun*, of gold; to the moon, of silver; and to the rest of the planets, of the several metals dedicated to them<sup>i</sup>: which clearly shews, that

<sup>g</sup> Philoponus περὶ Κοσμοποιΐας, λογ. ζ'. κεφ. ιδ'. p. 282.

<sup>h</sup> See *Leng's Vltb Boyle's Lecture*, p. 180; *Campbell on Miracles*, 218. Note; *Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity*, vol. i. 101, 102, &c.; *Jackson's Chronological Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 21. Note; and *Law's Theory of Religion*, p. 48; where he positively affirms, in opposition to *Le Clerc*, *Not. ad Grot. de Ver.* lib. i. 16. that the method of reckoning by weeks was much more ancient than the observation of the seven planets.

<sup>i</sup> *Mose Nevuch.* p. 3. c. 29.

the oriental hebdomadal division of time, so far from being merely astronomical, was in some instances at least entirely idolatrous. But to return from this digression.

That the fabric of this globe bespeaks an origin much anterior to the æra assigned by Moses, depends on speculations, which, however cautiously conducted, may never be allowed to disprove a fact<sup>k</sup>, capable of almost positive demonstration<sup>9</sup>). That the chief use of this globe of earth is to be the abode of man, cannot be doubted. The great and most material fact therefore to be decided is, When did man first stand in need of this abode? It matters nothing to us what the world was previously; without such an inhabitant as man, it could be no more to us than what the wild and desolate and unfrequented parts of the earth are at this day: of which, as it concerns no man to take notice, so need we not be solicitous as to such a state of the globe we dwell on. Surely our Reason may be brought to assent to these three propositions; that in the beginning God created the mass it consists of; that it

<sup>k</sup> The origin of the human race.

was, previously to the introduction of our great progenitor, “without form, and void,” whether in its first original state, or, as some writers have supposed<sup>1</sup>, by the dissolution of a former state; and that it was reduced to the order we now see it in, for the especial purposes of our race, by the immediate decree of God’s providence. In what manner the strata became so arranged as we see them; what time was necessary for the formation of such depositions from a watery fluid, or for such concretions from an igneous one, as we now behold, it may be amusing to calculate; but it can be of no use or certainty: of no certainty, for the reasons already stated; of no use, because, should the mere matter of this globe even be proved to have subsisted ages and ages before the creation of Adam, and to have undergone numberless revolutions, I *know not* that it could be of any concern to our race<sup>m</sup>. We date our title to the possession of it, and dominion over it, from Adam; and have no need to ascend higher. I say from Adam, not only because we are told so in

<sup>1</sup> See Note (3).

<sup>m</sup> See Note (3).

the first chapters of Genesis, but because our Saviour and St. Paul have also insisted upon it.      ji .

One event certainly is recorded by Moses, to which the face of the earth might be expected to bear testimony: I mean the deluge. Such a revolution could scarce fail to leave most durable traces behind it; but yet, in what degree, and to what extent, it may *now* be very difficult to determine. But that there are evidences of a submerſion of the continents of the present earth, none can deny; and therefore, before we enter upon enquiry how or when such diluvian matters were deposited as we find them, it must be admitted to be extraordinary, that this great event, recorded by an historian whose knowledge of the face of the earth must have been circumscribed within limits of a known extent, is not to be set aside from any direct want of evidence, even in situations and places not known to exist at the time he wrote. Let us recollect, that it is of an *universal* deluge that Moses writes; and that he assures us the waters covered the very tops of the hills. It may be so, some will say: on the tops of the hills in the neighbourhood

bourhood of Judea he observed shells and other marine exuviæ ; the spoils of a partial deluge of those regions : and it was easy to persuade his countrymen, that a flood, extending over all that tract of country known to them, had extended over all the world. But how might such a *mythologist* have been detected, when new discoveries had brought to light all that we have since learnt of Europe, Africa, Asia, and the whole continent of America ? If the marine exuviæ in one part of the globe are allowed to be an evidence of a partial deluge, would not the want of such *reliquiæ* in any extensive region, be a proof against the universality of the Mosaic deluge ? Here again then I must maintain, that the want of contradictory evidence ought to be allowed to operate as a confirmation.

I enter not at present into the question, whether the then continents were overwhelmed, and the bottom of the sea left dry ; or whether we now see only the remains of the very waters that covered the hills described by Moses ; because all I propose to enquire after is, whether there are not, in all parts of the globe, marks and signs of the  
the

the water having covered all that is now dry land? The possibility of such a catastrophe as the deluge is a distinct question; and the effects designed by it, as related by Moses, render it a question, which regards only the providence and power of God, which those must have leave to measure by their own Reason, who have so little Reason as not to see the absurdity of it<sup>(10)</sup>. However, I cannot but observe, that some of the latest discoveries in meteorology may serve to shew, that hitherto we have been incompetent to judge even of the physical causes, that may have operated: and some of these, particularly the convertibility of water into air<sup>n</sup>, or air into water, may have had a very material effect, and should teach us to be cautious how we apply our feeble calculations, to measure and determine any reputed acts of Providence.

The ninth verse of the first chapter of Genesis tells us, that such was once the state of the globe, that, in order that the dry land should appear, all the waters under the heaven required to be gathered together into

<sup>n</sup> See *M. de Linc's Experiments with the Hygrometer.*

one place : and why might not a mere revocation of this decree restore things to their pristine state, when no dry land was visible ? The catastrophe of the deluge, for what we know, may be fully sufficient to account for all those surprising circumstances of fossil bodies found in places where no correspondent animals or vegetables now exist (<sup>u</sup>) ; for besides other conjectures, that have been formed, the occasion of the deluge, as represented by Moses, may possibly have been sufficient to vindicate the idea, that the inclination of the axis of the globe underwent a change at that time<sup>v</sup> ; or if not then, perhaps before, or perhaps since ; we know nothing certain. That elephants once existed in Siberia, and crocodiles in our own country, proves nothing contradictory to the Mosaic records, which give intimation of at least two very important changes and revolutions ; namely, the curse of the earth, and the deluge. As far as a change of climate only is supposed to be intimated, the veracity of Moses on this head is not more reasonably to be questioned, than the veracity

<sup>o</sup> See *Howard's Scripture History*.



of Juvenal, Horace, Diodorus, Strabo, Ovid, Polybius, and Varro ; all of whom, as is well known, have actually described things quite different from what we now experience in the places they mention. The two former speak of such severe winters at Rome as are never heard of now. Many passages of Horace suppose the streets of Rome full of snow and ice ; but in our days the Tyber no more freezes at Rome, than the Nile at Cairo. However, of this we may be assured, that philosophy can supply no actual proof against the probability of such a catastrophe as the Mosaic deluge ; while we have this constantly to allege in support of it, that the continental parts of our globe all bear testimony to a submerſion of them at one time or other : that naturalists of the highest eminence, in contradiction to many false proofs that have been brought forward of the high antiquity of our present continents, have assured us, that *their* observations have led to an entirely different conclusion ; and that as far as the superficial parts of the earth can be held to supply proper chronometers, they all tend to prove the *small* antiquity of our present

present continents<sup>p</sup>: that no one monument of human art, or even human existence, clearly prior to those times, has been yet discovered: no medals, no inscriptions, no utensils, no ornaments of man have been found, indicative of a greater antiquity than that assigned by Moses<sup>q</sup>: while the fact itself undoubtedly stands corroborated by many collateral testimonies<sup>(12)</sup>. And this latter circumstance is certainly most to our purpose; for it is not the physical history of the earth we require to be instructed in, by the means of Revelation; but the history of man, as a moral and religious being.

The earth is solid and compact enough for our use; fertile enough; abundant in all things needful both for our support and our comfort: yet it certainly does not appear so methodically arranged as to suffer us to suppose it to have been free from great revolutions and catastrophes. Useful as it is, and beautiful as it is, in its very irregularities, we might surely be justified in con-

<sup>p</sup> See Notes (2) and (11).

<sup>q</sup> *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. vi. 287.

cluding,

cluding, that an irregular arrangement of the original depositions of the chaos, might from the very first have been more fitted to our wants and purposes, than one more uniform. If the strata had continued in what was apparently their first form, in concentric coats, we should have known perhaps only the outermost, or in some excavations a small number more. What a want of variety in regard to soils, and consequently perhaps to the growth and production of plants, might this have occasioned! How many mineral substances, both of use and ornament, might have for ever remained concealed in the bowels of the earth! and, instead of the richly variegated face of nature, which now serves to delight the eye, and exhilarate the heart, one uniform plain would have extended through all countries, interrupted only by the still more uniform scenery of the watery element.

§ See *Milton's Paradise Lost*, b. ix. 115. *Theodoretus* περί Προβολας, λογ. β'. *Nichols's Conferences*, vol. i. 35, 36. *Ray on the Creation*, 34, &c. *Derham's Physico-Theology*, b. iii. ch. 4. *Sullivan's View of Nature*, vol. i. 105. *Liebknecht's Elementa Geographiæ General.* (*de Montium usu.*) *Wallerius*, §. xxviii.

What

What particular revolutions may have occasioned the many dislocations of strata, which now serve to vary the face of the globe, and to which we owe the abrupt precipice, the towering Alps, the cataract and volcano, and other bold features of nature, it is vain to enquire. Fire may have done much, and water more; but of the ravages of water we have a succinct account; not written by a naturalist; not composed from a survey and examination of the several parts of the globe; not framed to support an hypothesis; but simply related as an act of God, to punish a wicked and disobedient race. The secondary causes put in motion for this purpose were such as we might expect would produce great alterations in the face of the globe. “The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven opened; and there was a continuance of rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights.” The effects of these events must, we may well suppose, have been both awful and extensive; even perhaps to the actual destruction and submersion of the then subsisting continents; which is the theory of one celebrated Naturalist

ralist of the age<sup>s</sup>, founded on very extensive observations, and supported by our own version of the Scriptural account of the curse, “ Behold I will destroy man, *with* the earth;” a reading, which the Septuagint and Vulgate countenance<sup>t</sup>. At all events, we may conclude it to have been a most stupendous revolution; and such as not only may serve us most fitly to account for some of the most striking phenomena and irregularities observable in the great mass of the globe; but without which it seems in many instances impossible to account for some of the most obvious appearances.

Even as a question in philosophy, if we reject the Mosaic account, we must substitute another; and this distinction between us will still subsist, that *we*, who have ocular demonstration of the fact, namely, of the universal submersion of our continents, at one time or other, cannot by any hypothesis explain it to the general satisfaction of the world: while Moses has both recorded and

<sup>s</sup> *De Luc.* See Notes (3) and (11).

<sup>t</sup> See *Foxton's Remarks on Burnet's Archæologia*, at the end of his *Doctrina Antiqua de Origin. Rerum*, p. 162. Note; and *Jamieson on the Use of Sacred History*, vol. i. 241.

explained a fact, of which he could not, in the nature of things, when he wrote, have had any sensible or experimental knowledge; but which, besides all other testimonies, the face of the whole globe, and the observations of naturalists, have been since found, in a most surprising manner, to corroborate and confirm (<sup>13</sup>).

## NOTES TO SERMON VI,

---

Page 277. note (1).

*AND this surely is the most reasonable reply that can be made.]* The Jews, whose Memorial I had occasion to notice in my third Discourse, give the following reason for rejecting the Mosaic records, as *sacred* documents. “La religion qu’on nous a enseignée étoit toute remplie de principes mystiques. L’histoire du monde primitif étoit mystérieuse, obscure, incohérente; les événements étranges, et ressemblans si peu, jusques dans les plus petites nuances, aux phénomènes du monde où nous vivons, qu’ils nous paroissent presque incroyables.” It is true, besides the books of Moses, they confess, that they had been taught to regard the *Talmud* of equal authority; and therefore they might with some reason be suspicious of *this* part of their education: but to object to *any* account of the origin of things, merely because of its *disagreement with present appearances*, is no less than absurd; though it may seem to have the countenance of so eminent a philosopher as Mr. Hume. For it is certainly in the highest degree *unphilosophical*, to make experience the sole test either of past or future events: the utmost we can learn from experience is, the *usual course of nature*; but how or when such *became* the usual course of nature, must for ever baffle our researches: these things are for ever confounded. Nature will admit the observer and experimentalist enough into her secrets, to enable them to cooperate with her in converting to the use of man the fairest of her productions, and to calculate upon the probable result of many curious operations: but when she herself was set to work, and how she became empowered to do what she has done and still does, she cannot inform

inform us, if she would. Nor can she in any manner assure us how long the present course and chain of operations may continue. The *creation must have been miraculous*: the seed must have existed before the tree, or the tree before the seed; the hen before the egg, or the egg before the hen; and each of these, with a view to present experience, is a miracle. And in the fabric of the very body of the earth, let us ascend as high as we please; let us bring its substance from the sun or a comet; let us set attraction, and gravity, fermentation, deposition, crystallization, and what we will to work, in order to its arrangement, this is really nothing to the purpose; things could not be as they are now, when these first began to operate: and that they have *eternally* operated is not merely difficult to prove, but is a proposition, which absolutely resists all proof.

Epicurus, had he but admitted into his system a Providence, and final causes, might have defended his atomical combinations against the philosopher for ever, upon his own plea, of things being otherwise in the world now, than when it was produced: for though nothing could be more absurd, than to fancy that a jumble of unintelligent atoms could be more capable at one time of producing things than at another; yet certainly, had God chosen *so* to form the world, and all things in it, it would be no argument against such a cosmogony, that since that time things have been otherwise propagated and continued. Such a jumble of atoms might, under the providential direction of God, have formed the *first* man; whereas the *first* man could not have been formed, as the species has been since propagated. In all theories of the world, therefore, there is certainly a point where we *must* stop, and where *miracles* must be resorted to; but it requires no small degree of prudence to know exactly where to stop. "If we would give credit," says the learned Dr. Nieuwentyt, in the Preface to his *Religious Philosopher*, "to those who pretend to tell us such things, as how  
 " God made the world, put all things together, produced and continued motion, &c. &c. we must needs  
 " conceive, that there was no more wisdom requisite  
 " to bring this glorious frame of the world into such a  
 " beautiful order as we see it, and to continue it in the  
 " same,



“same, than what the authors of such books were “masters of.” This is certainly most true; and yet, how many still continue forward and eager to disclose to us, not only what the present appearances of the earth may be said to indicate, and by what principles of motion she *seems* to be governed; but whence she came, and exactly how every thing came to be as it is! The question, as it concerns the sacred books, is merely, whether philosophers can discover any thing in the works of God, that positively contradicts the Mosaic history. That the Mosaic history should contradict their preconceived notions of things, is not to be wondered at; especially when they are unreasonable enough to expect, that it should be at all conformable to the present course of things.

In judging of the Mosaic cosmogony, we do not want philosophers to tell us, whether God could make the world in six days, or according to the order described by Moses; whether he could make man of the dust of the ground, and infuse into him the breath of life: we are entirely assured of the possibility of these things; and what is more, of the absolute necessity of some such commencement of things. And therefore we do not even require philosophers to tell us, whether a more fit method could have been devised; it is a point they never can resolve. “God has left us no “answer to those that ask, why he did not make the “world in a day, or why not sooner; nor why he made “so many creatures, that seem to be of no use; and a “thousand other questions. God has reserved such “kind of objections to the answer of his own sovereign.” *Wolsley on Atheism.*

It has been very well said by one author, that, in order to know God thoroughly, we should be Gods ourselves; and the same may be said, in many respects, of his ways and his works. We must not be too inquisitive into the *quomodo* of things. How causes now operate, we may be permitted to investigate; but how THE CAUSE OF CAUSES shall operate, let us presume not to determine. “A quoi d’abord,” says M. de Luc, in his *Reply to the Jews’ Memorial*, “voudriez-vous pouvoir comparer le monde primitif, c’est-à-dire sans “doute, le commencement des choses observables, pour que

“ la Raïson humaine, qu’ici vous établissez juge, pût le  
 “ comprendre, et décider, s’il a *dû* être ou ne pas être à  
 “ la maniere décrite par Moïse ? Il est impossible que  
 “ vous trouviez aucun objet de comparaison, ni dans  
 “ l’observation ou *l’expérience*, ni dans aucun principe  
 “ *à priori* ; prétendre le trouver, c’est n’avoir pas réflé-  
 “ chi sur la nature de la chose, qui tient à l’acte de  
 “ *créer*.” This is strongly put, but does not at all ex-  
 ceed the truth. The *mode of creation* we can have no  
 means of ascertaining ; and it is absolutely vain to spe-  
 culate beyond what now appears to be *the course of*  
*things*. “ Homo naturæ minister, et interpres, tantum  
 “ facit et intelligit, quantum de naturæ ordine, re, vel  
 “ mente, *observaverit* : nec amplius scit, aut potest.”  
*Nov. Org.* lib. i. aph. 1. which an eminent modern geo-  
 logist renders, “ Man is but the minister and interpreter  
 “ of nature, and can neither extend his power nor his  
 “ knowledge *a hain’s breadth beyond his experience and*  
 “ *observation of the present order of things*.” *Playfair’s*  
*Illustration of the Huttonian Theory*, p. 18.

Whether the world was made according to the same  
 rules and methods, it is impossible for us to know ;  
 though the world is now *preserved* by mechanical laws,  
 (and yet not that universally, see *Professor Jenkin*, vol.  
 ii. ch. 9.) there is no reason to suppose it to have  
 been so made at first. “ The origin of the universe,”  
 says the same learned writer, “ was by the immediate  
 “ hand of God, before the appointment of the several  
 “ laws, which afterwards were to take place : and we  
 “ might as well endeavour to reduce the working of  
 “ miracles to the standing laws of nature, as the crea-  
 “ tion of the world. For certainly, of all miracles,  
 “ the creation of the world must be the greatest ; not  
 “ only as it signifies the production of matter and mo-  
 “ tion out of nothing, but as it was the putting things  
 “ into such order, as to make them capable of the laws  
 “ of motion ordained for them.” “ On ne me persua-  
 “ dera pas,” says Wallerius, (I have only a translation  
 to refer to,) “ que le Tout-puissant se soit servi, dans  
 “ l’ouvrage de la création, des loix que lui-même a  
 “ dictées à la nature.” *De l’Origine du Monde*, §. xix.

Mr. Hume, in his posthumous works, as cited by  
 Dr. Darwin, in his *Zoonomia*, sect. xxxix. 4. 8. con-  
 cludes,

cludes, that the world might have been *generated*, rather than *created*; and the Doctor inclines to think, that, "if we may compare infinities, it would seem to require a greater infinity of power to cause the *causes* of " *effects*, than to cause the effects themselves." But *God*, as Moses represents the case, in first causing the effects, caused also the causes of succeeding effects: man, and other animals, and the vegetables of the earth, were created by his FIAT; all perfect in their kind, and with *inherent* powers of *future propagation*.

It is wisest then to regard every thing as proceeding now according to the laws of God; but not to make such rules and principles, and modes of action, (as too many do,) laws of invincible necessity to God himself. The planets certainly appear to perform their revolutions round the sun by the nicest combination of two mechanical forces; but how impossible is it for us ever to assign the physical causes, which enable them to describe their several orbits! If we shall have truly discovered the principle of attraction, the projectile force will for ever elude our researches: and perhaps, after all, there is no other attraction or projectile whatsoever concerned, than the will of God. What the earth *is*, we may with reason enquire; what it *has been*, none can certainly tell us better than Moses; (his inspiration out of the question.) Where it is, we may with reason also endeavour to discover; but whence it came, none can ever inform us but God himself: and as this information seems to be withheld, in the only records of the creation accounted sacred, we may well regard it as a matter of no possible concern to us, while we have faith in the leading doctrine of the whole; namely, that "in the beginning GOD created the HEAVENS " and the EARTH." "For my part," says the celebrated M. Huygens, in the conclusion of his ΚΟΣΜΟ-ΘΕΩΡΟΣ, or *Conjectures concerning the Planetary Worlds*, "I shall be very well contented, and shall count I have " done a great matter, if I can but come to any know- " ledge of the nature of things as they now are; never " troubling my head about their beginning, or how " they were made; knowing *that* to be out of the " reach of human knowledge, or even conjecture."

It is not to *evade* the force of any philosophical theo-

ries then, that the Theologian insists upon the Mosaic cosmogony being a *miraculous* relation of things: it is truly unphilosophical to suppose it would have been more credible, had it not been so: it is its peculiar distinction, and exactly serves to place it on a *different footing* from all the world-making systems of other nations; though Mr. Paine is pleased to insist upon it, that they are all alike: and Dr. Toulmin (whose works I cite merely because I know they have been *published*, for more unphilosophical works I never read,) affirms, that no account of the creation carries with it more the face of probability, than the Gentoo Fable of *Burmha*. The Gentoo Fable of *Burmha* is certainly miraculous enough; but the miracles are not miracles operated by God towards the production of the visible things of this earth, but the miracles of *Burmha* himself, and his family; which have no relation whatever to the visible order of things. (See an ingenious and lively *Answer* to this strange writer, by the *Rev. Ralph Sneyd*, 1783.) Moses relates the miracle of the creation in a mere history of the *effects* produced by the fiat of God: other cosmogonists, even when they refer these effects to the will of God, will persist in telling us, not what supernatural, but what natural causes operated to produce these effects; whereas Moses is philosophical enough to refer the first effects solely to the *cause of causes*; those effects themselves indeed including the causes of subsequent effects and operations. I call this philosophical, because I see no other possible way of accounting for the present state of things: for even had the world been formed according to such laws of motion as are now necessary for its preservation; had the several strata and mineral beds been produced according to such processes as we should suppose capable of similar effects now; yet, not only the *animals* of the earth, but the whole tribe of *vegetables* must have been miraculously brought into existence. No crystallizations, no fermentations, no elementary combinations whatsoever will now, I apprehend, be supposed capable of having produced a single blade of grass. The advancement of knowledge, which has determined us to reject all ideas of spontaneous or equivocal generation, must particularly serve to prove to us the necessity

fity of a miraculous interposition in the first instance, in regard not only to animals, but to vegetables; no combinations of matter that we know of, or laws of motion, being adequate to produce either a perfect plant without seed, or a perfect seed without the parent plant.

I should not have dwelt so long upon this, but that among those who have been eager to treat the cosmogony of Moses, as a mythologue or allegory, some have apprehended that the whole is to be considered as an Oriental hyperbole, which, not making any distinction between the *mediate* and *immediate* acts of God, refers every thing to the Deity by a mere figure of speech. This is expressly alleged by the Jews of Berlin, as one reason for their incredulity: but the case is not applicable, where the question relates to the creation of the world. Every thing may be said to be immediately the act of God, by such a figure of speech, while the act of *creation* and *miracles* must alone be really such, without any figure of speech. Thus when God is said to have “*planted* a garden eastward in Eden,” this may seem, from the mere use of the term “*planted*,” to be only a figure of speech: but when it is added, that out of the ground the Lord God made every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, this may reasonably be regarded as no figure of speech, or Oriental hyperbole; for how could trees grow at the first beginning of things but by the *immediate* agency and appointment of God? And I think the 11th verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis sufficient answer to every such objection; for I know not how grass could ever have grown, (to speak philosophically), or herb, or fruit-tree, had not God originally caused them to spring out of the ground, all of them in a condition to yield seed, and fruit, (whose seed is in itself,) for the future supply and maintenance of man and beast.

Page 278. note (2).

*It is thus that one very eminent naturalist, and very pious Christian, &c.]* Though in the preceding note I have expressed myself generally unfriendly to all such systems and theories as carry us back to the first commencement of things, it being my settled opinion that no observations whatsoever will ever inform us of the exact

truth of matters ; and that even if this globe of earth *was* formed by such physico-mechanical laws, as operate at present in its preservation, yet that they must have operated at the æra of the creation, under such extremely different circumstances, as to baffle all our enquiries ; yet I am by no means desirous of passing over such testimonies, either for or against revelation, as the body of the earth may be thought by any to supply. My object is only to discover what the result seems to be, of the application of this test : and as *modern* opinions are what I have chiefly proposed to examine, through the whole course of these Lectures, M. de Luc's theory may reasonably take the lead, among those which have been recently advanced in corroboration of the Mosaic cosmogony ; for this venerable and very eminent naturalist is persuaded, that the holy Scriptures are entirely in correspondence with geological phænomena. He looks upon the deluge, and the chronology of that event, to be capable of positive proof ; and though his speculations ascend far beyond that period, yet as the deluge was the fulfilment of a prophecy, he justly regards the confirmation of this event to be a direct proof of the divine authority of the Scriptures, and to be sufficient to establish the divine mission of the author of the Pentateuch.

His idea is, that at the deluge the ancient continents sunk, and the original bed of the sea became dry, forming the continents which we now inhabit ; the summits of our highest mountains having been islands in the ancient sea. As these new continents must immediately have become subject to a new set of operations, which have continued from that time, and the effects of which are therefore both visible and measurable, he apprehends, that we have in these effects decisive chronometers ; and as many of them are independent of each other, and agree only in the epoch of their commencement, they afford a body of evidence of irresistible force. Of the operations that preceded the deluge according to this celebrated naturalist, the following is a short abstract. He agrees with his cotemporaries, MM. de la Metherie, de Saussure, Dolomieu, Pini, &c. that all the substances that form the mass of our continents, the basin of the sea, &c. including *granite*, must at some distant

distant epocha have been suspended in a liquid which covered the globe, whence they were at successive periods *chemically* precipitated. But he is singular in his opinion of the first determining cause or indispensable preliminary of such precipitations : he refers it, as I have stated in my Discourse, to the introduction of light among the other elements, which by inducing, according to its now known physical properties, *liquidity*, gave room for the elective attractions, and all other physico-mechanical operations. He thinks our continents were built up stratum upon stratum, at the bottom of the sea ; then reduced to ruins, and now elevated above the present sea, by the sinking of former continents ; the epoch of which event he judges, from very extensive observations, not to be more remote than the deluge. Coal *strata*, remains of terrestrial animals, bones of quadrupeds, and impressions of freshwater fish, he thinks belonged to the islands of the primitive world ; which sunk, and above which the sea afterwards produced fresh strata or beds, before its retreat at the deluge. Of the accompanying changes of the atmosphere and of climates, I shall have occasion to speak elsewhere.

This is the summary of M. de Luc's theory, as far as it applies generally to the subject of this discourse. M. de Luc is too well known as an observer, and as a very curious experimentalist, to make it necessary to state, that he has been particularly careful and industrious to collect facts to substantiate his theory ; many of which are certainly exceedingly curious and important. See his *History of the Earth and of Man*, addressed to her Majesty, his *Letters to M. de la Metherie* in the *Journal de Physique*, and his *Geological Letters* in the 2d and following vols. of the *British Critic*.

I have thought it right to give this statement of M. de Luc's principles at length, because he has very recently had occasion to recal the attention of the public to his arguments upon this head ; and as the whole that relates to the age of *our* continents, according to this theory, depends upon *observation*, it is but reasonable that it should be made known, not only to naturalists, but to theologians. Besides, whatever becomes of the general question, and how much soever it may

be opposed, I confess I find in this theory some general principles laid down, which seem highly credible, and of great importance : as first, in regard to the derivation of our *strata* from *chemical* precipitations. Though the origin of *granite*, and consequently its chemical precipitation from a liquid, is still a matter of dispute, and will perhaps for ever be so ; yet that many of our *strata* have been so precipitated, seems very probable from their contents. How shall we ever account otherwise for a succession of *distinct* strata ? What can ever have determined the sea to deposit at one time only calcareous, at another only aluminous, at another only arenaceous matter ? I cannot help agreeing with M. de Luc, that the change from one species of stratum to another indicates a change of cause ; and therefore, that the mass of our continents does *seem* to be the product of successive operations during which the producing causes have undergone successive changes. This is a thing very much overlooked, and for which no other theory, that I know of, has duly provided.

Now if such has been the origin of our principal strata, I shall venture to pronounce, that no argument in regard to *time* can be drawn from the effects of such operations. And if it pleased God to form the globe by the intervention of physical causes, I know none so likely to have been employed, as fire, and chemical attractions ; for however slow and gradual some of the changes in the body of the earth may have been since it became an habitable globe, yet when it *was to become such* by the determination of God's pleasure, it would be absurd to suppose that its arrangement would be left to depend on any processes, that might *unnecessarily retard* the execution of such a decree of the Almighty. Though time is really nothing to an infinite and eternal Being, and the course of things may serve to shew, that a gradual and progressive operation of causes and successive production of effects, are quite consistent with the providential government of the world ; yet I cannot bring myself to believe, that this or any other planet was subjected to any *protracted* course of operations, when it was first ordained to become habitable. The *six days* of Moses appear to me incomparably more philosophical than Buffon's correspondent epochs of nature : according



cording to which the earth was for 37,206 years not only uninhabitable, but absolutely too hot to touch: then inhabited for many thousand years by creatures capable of living in boiling water: in about 60,000 years, and not before, fitted to sustain terrestrial animals, when elephants and rhinoceroses were for 15,000 years the lords of this lower creation: and man, for whom alone it now seems to have been created, could not enter till after a period of full 75,000 years: and in 93,000 years, or thereabouts, the race is to be frozen out of the world again; for as it began with being too hot to touch, it will then be too cold to inhabit. Such calculations are surely a burlesque upon philosophy, and almost impious, as applied to God. The world may have been reduced to order, certainly, by some course of physico-mechanical operations; but if so, I think certainly by the quickest and most active possible. In his *Natural History*, M. Buffon makes a reflection on the *Protogæa* of Leibnitz, which I cannot help thinking quite as applicable to his own epochs of nature. "The grand defect of this theory," says he, "is, that it is not applicable to the present state of the earth: it is the *past*, which it explains; and this past is so far back, and has left so few remains, that we may say what we please of it, and the probability will be in proportion as a man has talents to elucidate what he asserts. Besides, it offends against the *unity of creation*; for if it was as he supposes, it must necessarily be admitted, that shell-fish, and other inhabitants of the sea, existed long before man, and all other terrestrial animals. Now, independent of Holy Writ, is it not reasonable to think, that all animals and vegetables are *nearly as ancient* as each other?" Now nothing could take place upon so great a scale so suddenly perhaps as chemical precipitations; nothing could be more active or penetrating than fire; either as the cause of liquidity, as a lifting force, or possibly for the purposes of consolidation. To the fact of most of our mineral strata having been formed by chemical precipitations, we have then the consent of many eminent modern observers; and we find them agreeing in another principle, namely, that no such precipitations take place now in the sea, nor any operations, which bear the

the slightest analogy to those productions of mineral substances in strata, which took place formerly in our globe. Depositions the sea still makes; but is not subject to chemical precipitations. The *Huttonian* theory, it is well known, differs very much from this, not only in regard to the origin of the granitic and other mineral beds, but particularly in respect to such an interrupted course of operations; its chiefest principle being, that *similar strata* are still and for ever forming at the bottom of the sea, and consolidating there, by means of a central or subterraneous heat.

I shall not pretend to decide between these two theories: of the operation of causes, *which have long since ceased to operate*, we can certainly judge but very imperfectly; nor yet of what is passing *at the bottom of the sea*; or of the effects of subterraneous heat; of which, notwithstanding the great progress lately made in such enquiries, it is certainly and confessedly very difficult to determine any thing certain. I should incline however to think it much more probable, that the earth owes its first arrangement either to causes not now operating, or to an extraordinary, perhaps a miraculous modification of existing causes, the action of which ceased, or was suspended, when the purposes were fulfilled, for which they were designed; such as the formation and consolidation of the several strata; and, I should be disposed to think, even their elevation and dislocation.

In volcanic countries, and in some seas, very violent and very extensive effects have been known to have been produced suddenly, or within a very short space of time; but the *general features* of the globe remain much as they were: and if the *Huttonian* system be true, I think it must still be granted, that many natural operations are for the present at least suspended, and will be so, probably, while the earth continues habitable. Let the rivers of the globe convey what they will to the sea, and volcanos eject what they will from the body of the earth, in a few places, we are sensible now of no effects correspondent to those which must have originally raised the Alps, and other granitic mountains; and enabled them, according to the *Huttonian* system, to break through or separate the general  
mass

masses of superincumbent strata. I do not mean to deny, that they may have been elevated, as the Huttonian system states; but let their elevation have been owing to whatever natural cause theorists may choose to assign, I think the suspension of the action of such causes is proof enough of some especial interposition on the part of Providence; and that the state of the globe does in fact conceal from us many secrets, as well as to what is past, as to what is to come.

It is a favourite maxim, which philosophers have adopted from Seneca, and Professor Playfair makes it the motto to his *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory*, “Nunc naturalem causam quærimus et assiduam, non raram et fortuitam.” But surely the lifting forces, which this theory supposes to have operated in the elevation and protrusion of the granitic masses, as well as the operations of fire necessary upon this system to their production, must be accounted rather among the rare and fortuitous causes, to which this globe is subject; not less so at least than the sinkings and subsidings, and precipitations of M. de Luc’s theory.

These two theories may be considered as the extremes of modern geology, as far as the history of the earth may seem to be connected with the history of man. M. de Luc apprehends, that not only our present continents are of small antiquity, not exceeding the æra of the deluge, (from which period they supply us with certain chronometers,) but that every physical operation on the globe may be traced back to the exact æra of the creation, according to Moses. Dr. Hutton and his followers imagine the whole globe to be of immense and unfathomable antiquity; subject to periodical revolutions, which depend on causes that operate so slowly, as entirely to preclude all calculations upon the subject. With regard then to both these theories, I shall endeavour to fix upon such parts as seem to me to be of most concern to the Theologian, and then leave every reader to judge for himself.

Both theories are in agreement as to the original formation of what are commonly called the stratified parts of the globe, at the bottom of the sea; and of their subsequent fracture and dislocation by catastrophes of great extent and inconceivable violence: for I see  
but

but little difference, in point of force and violence, between the sudden sinking of immense continents, and the protrusion of Alpine rocks, through an immense body of superincumbent strata; even though this should not be very sudden. If we can find our way back to *any such revolution of the earth*, I think we need enquire no further; any such revolution I conceive to be, if not physically miraculous, yet morally so; and to form a most important epoch in the history of man. Very many things concur to carry us back to such a period; for whether the Mosaic deluge was universal or not, whether it is the same, of which traces are to be found, more or less disfigured, in every profane history or mythology, without exception, there can be no possible doubt, but that nearly at that very æra, or indeed exactly so, many things immediately connected with the *present population of the earth*, seem to have had their origin and commencement. M. de Luc's hypothesis in regard to the *deluge* (not to ascend higher at present) is, that at that time ancient continents sunk, and that the present continental parts of the globe were suddenly abandoned by the sea; and to use the expression of another most eminent observer, (M. Dolomieu) delivered over to the dominion of man. Such a revolution must of course have subjected the raised *strata*, as M. de Luc observes, to a course of fresh operations; such as the growth and decay of vegetables, the action of rain, and frosts, and rivers, &c. and these are all processes and operations, the products and effects of which, he contends, are capable of measurement. Such an antiquity assigned to our continents is certainly a very low one, comparatively with the extravagant calculations of many other theorists, the Huttonians in particular: and yet, so far from being singular in assigning such a date to our continents, the observations of MM. Dolomieu and Saussure, whose names carry with them a most distinguished authority, brought them certainly to the same conclusion, as to the low antiquity of the present continents. See the *Journal de Physique*, 1792, and the *Voyage dans les Alpes* of M. Saussure, §. 625.

M. Dolomieu's expression is very strong: "Je défendrai une vérité qui me paroît incontestable, et dont  
" il

“ il me semble voir la preuve dans toutes les pages de l’histoire, et dans celles où sont consignés les faits de la nature—Que l’état de nos continens *n’est pas ancien* : qu’il n’y a pas *long-temps* qu’ils ont été donnés—à l’empire de l’homme.” Here then we have a reference to *faits*, which observation must be left to decide upon; and upon which I shall only offer these remarks; namely, that many cases already adduced seem to carry very great force with them: see, as one reference only, *M. de Luc’s Vth Geological Letter*, in the 4th vol. of the *British Critic*; while the Huttonian system of a *gradual* detritus, sufficient to account for not only the formation of all that is existing, but for the removal also of all that is missing of our stony strata, appears, on many accounts, entirely inadmissible: for though we certainly cannot measure, or in any manner judge of, the quantity of materials, which in the lapse of innumerable ages the rivers of the earth *may have* transmitted to the sea; yet, as many rivers empty themselves into *lakes*, and have been in other ways making depositions, which admit of measurement, we have, I think, undoubted facts to oppose to the supposition, that such causes have been operating for an indefinite time.

I know all these points have been repeatedly canvassed and examined; but not by any means to the removal of all difficulties upon the subject. I think this particular circumstance of lakes, which M. de Luc so much insists on, is an invincible obstacle in the way of the Huttonian system; and Professor Playfair is obliged himself, in this instance, to have recourse to hypothesis, to remove the difficulty, though contrary to his own principles. See his *Illustrations*, p. 365. At p. 403, he opposes to M. de Saussure’s notion of a *débauche*, the circumstances of the longitudinal valley on the east of Mont Blanc; which, as he observes, has its opening in the middle: and he would infer, that it not only could not have been so formed by a *débauche*, but must have been produced by the running of the two streams from the *Col de Segne* and *Col de Ferret*. But the stream from the *Col de Segne* passes through the *Lac de Combai*, which would surely not have existed till this time, had that

that stream been the vehicle of such a detritus as must have been necessary to the formation of the valley.

As to the *circulation of habitable worlds*, by the means of continual decay and renovation, it *seems to imply*, (so useful and so beautiful is the present *variegated* face of nature,) that before the earth could ever have assumed a state entirely suitable and desirable for man's habitation, one perfect world at least must have been destroyed and worn to pieces; or its inhabitants must have lived without the advantages of any loose materials; and this for ages and for ages. Compare sections 114. 116. 117. 126. of *Professor Playfair's Illustrations*. I only say, that this *seems* to be a consequence of the system; *decay*, or *wasting*, being made the *first* processes in the production of all our *strata*.

It is surely better to suppose, that as many of the loose materials of the globe, as well as many of the most indurated, seem of indispensable utility to man; whatever physical operations may have taken place in the *first* production of either, were by the special providence of God accelerated, by some violent catastrophes, external or internal, or both combined; or by such processes as precipitation, (for even our sands *have been* suspected, and I think with reason, of being chemically produced; see both *De Luc* and *Saussure*; and our pebbles of having been formed originally in *nodules*, and not to be owing entirely to attrition;) see *Douglas on the Antiquity of the Earth*, 49. Upon the suspension of such operations, nature possibly began or resumed her course of gradual and progressive changes, which, as long as it shall please God to continue without any general interruption, may serve, and surely must serve, to supply some chronometers connected with the history of man. That this globe of earth has continued exactly in its present situation and condition for such a length of ages as may allow for the gradual wearing away of our deepest valleys, and transportation of the missing materials, I cannot bring myself to conceive; but should much rather agree to any system, which, by the sudden sinking and submersion of former continents, or violent elevation of pre-existing strata, or by *débâcles*, which M. de Saussure has recourse to,  
may

may allow us to suppose, that the *present diversified* state of the globe is coeval with the present race of man. Revolutions, that seem to extend to the very foundations of the earth, (and the visible condition of the globe seems only referable to *such*,) whether our valleys have been suddenly depressed by sinkings, or our mountains raised by extraordinary lifting forces; whether water shall have undermined the pillars of the earth, and let the strata drop; or subterraneous fires, and elastic fluids, driven up from below all the granitic and porphyritic matters, which form our highest ridges; such events could scarcely have been unaccompanied with great changes in the condition of the *inhabitants* of the earth: and the only question will be, whether such revolutions may have had any moral ends; which those who believe God to be the moral governor of the world will not hesitate to admit, and those who do not believe so cannot contradict. Of one *such* revolution the Mosaic writings give a succinct account; and perhaps of more than one; for what may have been the physical effects of the *curse of the earth*, we know not: but while the face of the globe bears testimony to violent and great catastrophes, and every human theory has recourse to them; catastrophes in which the sea seems undoubtedly to have changed its bed, either by depression or elevation, and by which of course the inhabitants of the earth must have been universally or partially overwhelmed; to find, in the oldest book extant, an account of such a revolution, in which the very foundations of the earth *were* shaken, and “all the fountains of the great deep broken up,” is certainly a very extraordinary circumstance, and one, which, instead of standing in the way of theorists, they seem particularly to want. For though some may be disposed to think the globe is in ruins, yet they are *habitable* ruins; and no doubt such *catastrophes* enter as much into the design of God’s providence, as the most regular, slow, and gradual operations. Let the philosopher then continue to investigate his “*causas naturales et assiduas*,” the common and visible course of nature; but let him not pretend to exclude the more rare catastrophes and revolutions, which not only have been recorded, but which the history of man and the face

face of the globe seem evidently to confirm. I must not say that Professor Playfair excludes them, for he expressly avows the contrary; but in the length of time, which he allows for the gradual excavation of our valleys, and reduction of our mountains, he certainly ascends far beyond the æra of the deluge, which we conceive to have been unquestionably one of those general catastrophes and revolutions, the æra of which is assignable. We may mistake for ever in our enquiries into the specific causes of the submersion of our continents; but that what *is dry land* was once sea we cannot doubt; and the history and chronology of the world seem to carry us pretty regularly back to the very æra of the Mosaic deluge.

What was the physical state of the globe preceding this must be mere matter of conjecture; though I have already said, that the notion of chemical precipitations from a liquid seems almost necessary to account for the succession of distinct strata; and a fluid state of the globe, at least superficially, seems not only to be consistent with the Scriptures, and to be demonstrable from the figure of the earth, but to be a point, in which philosophers, ancient and modern, have been always more agreed than in any thing else; the Huttonians being almost singular, if not entirely so, in their denial of it. Whether liquidity was introduced, as M. de Luc has supposed, I presume not to judge; but I am very certain, that his notion is not more conjectural than many that have met with a much better reception in the world. Nor is it altogether original; Wallerius having expressly attributed to the introduction of *light* the first fluidity of the chaos, and the commencement of the attractive influences. See his *Origine du Monde*, paragraph. xiv. xvi. xvii. Nor is the opinion of Leibnitz far different; “*Calor autem motusve intestinus ab igne est, seu luce, id est, tenuissimo spiritu permeante: atque ita ad motricem causam perventum est, unde sacra quoque historia cosmogeniæ initium capit Protogæa.*” §§. ii. iii. iv. Professor Playfair might have known, that the title of M. de Luc’s tenth Letter to M. La Metherie, as well as the reasonings in it, were no such *novelties* as he seems to think them. See his *Illustrations*, p. 479. Still I think all these speculations



tions are *too* conjectural to found any solid argument on. Moses does not tell us what specific physical effects the first introduction of light wrought upon the chaos, except that, as before the earth was "without form and void," and "darkness on the face of the deep," this was the *first* step towards its change: and philosophers may speculate upon it as they please; it is enough to know they cannot disprove it. Mr. Kirwan makes it the source of all the *volcanic* operations that have taken place: other theorists have assigned to it different offices; but very many agree in conceiving it to have been either the cause or immediate consequence of the first *commotions* that took place in the chaotic mass; and this long before its chemical or physical properties were at all understood. Besides those theories whose authors are well known, I have many others now lying before me, which it is quite unnecessary to cite: but there is not one of them, which does not pretend to explain matters, with the fullest confidence, that whether light was the first cause or the first consequence of motion in the chaos, it could not have been otherwise than according to the exact terms of their respective systems. M. de Luc and Wallerius, though they make it the first physical cause of fluidity or liquidity, very properly refer its production to the immediate act of God; and thus we are brought back to a MIRACLE, where, if not before, all enquiries should certainly terminate.

Page 280. note (3).

*And till this is ascertained to a certainty—all our speculations concerning past transactions must be in the greatest degree vague and hypothetical.]* It has been generally thought, that the great attention which has lately been paid to experimental philosophy in all its branches, and particularly to chemistry, must enable us in time to account for many geological phenomena, which have hitherto been inexplicable; and that we are every day making advances towards a more correct knowledge of the structure of the globe, and the nature of the causes that have operated in the production of both the stratified and unstratified parts of the earth. It is undeniable, that many very important discoveries have already

Y

been

been made, and that many more may reasonably be expected to follow, from the peculiar attention paid to chemistry; but whatever help we may receive from it, in judging of the present operation of natural causes, or in prognosticating future effects, I think it scarcely allows us to be very confident, as to any satisfactory solution of *past* operations. The very knowledge we have obtained of many substances hitherto entirely misunderstood, and whose properties were formerly altogether *mistaken*, should certainly make us extremely cautious, not only of forming theories, but even of pronouncing any thing to be capable of being reduced to a certainty, concerning the action of any physical causes in time past.

I have in the preceding note alluded to the opinion of many modern philosophers; that most of our strata owe their origin to chemical precipitations: to mechanical precipitations from a liquid they must at least be referred; but this seems scarcely sufficient in any manner to account for the order and *distinction* of the several strata; they would surely in all instances be more mixed and confounded one with the other. And yet not only are they now found to be clearly separable into strata of distinct substances and materials; but often the animal and vegetable reliquæ, imbedded in the several strata, are found to be of distinct species, and to vary considerably. This led M. de Luc to conceive, that whatever had been the determining cause of such precipitations, it had not only affected the menstruum at the moment, but so changed its nature, and the nature also of the superincumbent atmosphere, as to have had an effect on animal life. And he thought he had discovered such causes, in the periodical developement and evolution of different elastic fluids, from the bottom of the primitive ocean. It is not my business to verify this or any other hypothesis; but only to suppose it possible, in order to shew how little we must know of such operations, when every experiment in chemistry tends to prove, that the whole system of chemical solutions and precipitations must depend on such curious affinities, and such an infinite variety of possible combinations of substances, as to elude all our enquiries. And if chemical precipitations are rejected, and the aqueous origin

origin of things set aside, can we promise ourselves more certainty from the adoption of the Vulcanic system? Can we pretend to decide more clearly any thing concerning the *possible* action and effects of fire in time past? I think not. I really apprehend, that to judge fairly of the matter, the determination of the specific causes, that may have operated in time past in the body of the earth, may be said to become every day more difficult, from the very discovery of the many different ways, in which the action of all physical causes whatsoever may be modified and affected. For to refer at once both to the Neptunian and Vulcanic theories, what can we be said to know, or what are we ever likely to know, for *certain*, concerning the power of water to become an universal solvent, in particular circumstances, or of the action and effects of fire, under different circumstances of compression?

It is surely very justifiably said by Mr. Kirwan, *Irish Trans.* vol. v. "that water, in certain circumstances, and with the addition of certain substances, may be admitted as an universal solvent, should not be denied, merely on account of our ignorance of those circumstances and auxiliary substances." And the whole of the Huttonian theory may certainly be said to depend on the effects of fire operating under circumstances, which we have now no means of ascertaining. Leibnitz depended for *his* system on some *unknown* action of fire. "Is enim nostrorum furnorum efficaciam immenso gradus durationisque excessu superans, quid mirum est, si tunc produxit, quæ nunc homines imitari non possunt?" And in another place, in a very animated style, "Unde prona suspicio est, quod exiguis speciminibus nos ludimus, naturam magnis operibus executam; cui Montes sunt pro alembicis, Vulcani pro furnis." *Protogæa*, §§. iii. x.

I do not mean to deny, that we may every day approach nearer to the discovery of the properties both of fire and water, and of the circumstances by which they may be severally modified and affected; but yet no discoveries can ever assure us of the exact circumstances, by which they may *have been* modified and affected in time past. We may learn generally the effects of pressure on *fire*, or by what circumstances the

soluble properties of *water* may be increased or diminished: but all these accidents and modifications must still have been always subject to every possible variation of degree and intensity, so as not to admit of any calculations so sure, as to found any solid argument upon them. I believe both fire and water have been the chief agents in the several revolutions that have affected those parts of the globe, which we have it in our power to examine; but to what extent, or under what precise circumstances, I neither think it possible to determine, nor do I see any great use in determining it, if we could. We are pretty generally agreed who made the world; *why* it was made we cannot doubt; *how* it was made can never be a matter of any essential concern to man, when so many millions of the human race pass their lives, and fulfil the ends of their creation, without a thought upon the subject, beyond what they conceive to have been revealed to them in the short account of the great Jewish Legislator; and therefore Calvin deduced an argument for the divinity of the Pentateuch from the very omission of all such philosophical subtilties. “*Artes reconditas aliunde discat, qui volet. Hic “ Spiritus Dei omnes simul sine exceptione docere voluit.*” In *Gen. i.*

As far as an examination into the visible products either of fire or water may enable us to apply these chemical agents with more certainty and more effect, in our laboratories, and in artificial processes of manifest utility, its importance must be evident and undeniable: but then this should always be the acknowledged object of such enquiries; for though we may find many different ways of converting to our use the existing materials of the globe, it can only be by combining and modifying what does exist: we can never form a new material, or multiply what is already provided for us; and yet it would appear, that nothing less could serve to *prove* any theory; synthesis being generally the only certain proof of a perfect analysis.

We may repeat even in this age, so much and so justly extolled for its advancement in knowledge, what was admirably said long ago upon the subject of *Systematic Physics*, by the entertaining author of the *Spectacle de la Nature*: “An experience of six thousand years  
“ is

“ is fully sufficient to inform us of what is accessible or  
 “ interdicted to us. So long as man, in his researches,  
 “ has busied himself about what *is* submitted to his  
 “ government, his efforts were always rewarded with  
 “ new discoveries: but so long as he presumed to dive  
 “ into the intimate structure of the several parts of the  
 “ universe, which he is not appointed to put in motion,  
 “ his ideas were never any thing but an odd medley of  
 “ fancies and uncertainties. If he studies the measures  
 “ of quantities and the laws of motion, not indeed to  
 “ fathom the heavens, or to weigh in a balance the  
 “ masses of the celestial bodies, but to know the order  
 “ of his days; if he observes the relations, which the  
 “ aspects of the heaven have with regard to his habita-  
 “ tion, and the progress of the light through the me-  
 “ diums, which he offers thereto; the helps which he  
 “ may find from the equilibrium of liquors, or from  
 “ the weight and celerity of the bodies he is master of,  
 “ or from all the other experiments that fall under his  
 “ eye, and especially under his hand; in short, if he  
 “ applies experiments to the necessities of life, this will  
 “ be a system of physics full of certainty, and produc-  
 “ tive of great advantages.” See the VIIIth Dialogue  
 of the *Spectacle de la Nature*; where, allowance being  
 made for the language of the times in which it was  
 written, much that is very sensible and very applicable  
 to the subject before us may be found. I cannot for-  
 bear transcribing the concluding sentence: (I copy from  
 the English edition of 1739:) “ Our reason always em-  
 “ ploys itself with success, when it strives to render ex-  
 “ perimental truths useful to us; when it prudently  
 “ makes use of God’s favours, and praises him for the  
 “ same: this is the whole sum of man’s knowledge.”

So much would not be said upon this subject, but  
 that it is, and ever will be, perhaps, the custom of the  
 world, to compare all philosophical theories of the  
 earth with the Mosaic cosmogony; from which two  
 evils seem to have arisen. Those theories, which have  
 been framed without any regard to the revealed ac-  
 count of things, have been thought to imply a philoso-  
 phical contempt of the sacred writings, as inconsistent  
 with the visible state of things; while many theories,  
 which have been severally invented to confirm every

article of the Bible cosmogony, having been found to be inadmissible and notoriously unphilosophical, have made people suspicious of all such explanations of matters, to such a degree, as to make them apprehend that the Bible contains nothing of real fact as to the first origin of things: whereas I shall make no scruple of declaring, that if I saw any *necessity* for believing the several articles of the Scripture cosmogony, to the extent that some very eminent divines and philosophers have judged it to be necessary, I should not hesitate to reject all philosophical hypotheses, that have recourse to time indefinite, or to any production of minerals, which they are not able to imitate, and confirm synthetically. But my ideas of the subject do not require this; and that I may not be suspected of *evading* any system that seems to affect the chronology or cosmogony of the Bible, I shall in few words state what my own sentiments are upon the subject. First, then, I am persuaded, that the earth exhibits sufficient proofs of *violent* revolutions and catastrophes; and though none such can be supposed to happen without the especial regard of God, and consequently for purposes of the most awful importance, yet I do conceive that there may be in nature forces sufficient for the production of such effects, without any other miracle than the determination of God's providence, to place things in such circumstances as to produce such violent and unusual phenomena. I believe in some such revolutions all the strata of the earth have been fractured and dislocated; and that the sea has covered our continents, once certainly, but perhaps many times; and I conceive the Mosaic deluge to have been indisputably one such catastrophe, and to be confirmed by many very extraordinary circumstances in the history and appearances of the earth, and of the present race of mankind. I do not regard the marine productions, which are found much below the superficies of the globe, to be proofs of the Mosaic universal deluge, otherwise than as they clearly evince not merely the possibility, but actuality of such a catastrophe as a general depression or elevation of the waters of the sea: and as *Moses could not* attain to the knowledge of any such event as the universal submersion of the continental parts of the globe, (supposing such to have  
taken

taken place,) otherwife than by tradition or revelation, I conceive we have an indisputable proof either that the event was authentically transmitted, or miraculously revealed to him. I am not certain, nor do I hesitate to acknowledge it, but that what is commonly called the Mosaic cosmogony might be the æra of such another revolution; when, after a new arrangement of things, Adam and Eve were truly introduced into the world as he describes, as the Protoplasts of the very race to which we belong. I do not pretend to say, this was not actually the very æra of the very *first* creation of our planet and our system; much less would I pretend to decide, that there has not been *time* sufficient since, for the production and ordering of all our mineral substances, by the operation of known physical causes: for I contend that there is now no knowing how the operation of such causes may have been in *time* past *retarded* or *accelerated*. But I think it possible; without any impeachment of the veracity of the author of the Pentateuch, that this globe and our whole system may be much older than the race of Adam; nor would my faith in the Bible be in the smallest degree shaken, by any philosophical proof that could be brought of antecedent revolutions in the body of the earth, let them ascend as high as any theorists require, short of infinity. This is not said by way of evasion. I published the same opinion four years ago, before the *Huttonian* theory, which has been thought so adverse to the account in the sacred records, had been openly vindicated by so eminent an advocate as Professor Playfair. I shall beg leave to refer to my book, entitled *Εἰς Θεὸς Εἰς Μεσότης*, from p. 75. to p. 129; where I have fully expressed my sentiments concerning the creation and history of man: and I make this reference the more particularly, because I find the Huttonian theory excused by the learned Professor, upon grounds entirely conformable to the notions I have there avowed.

It is but a piece of justice due to Dr. Hutton and his learned advocate, to extract the passage. “On what “is now said is grounded another objection to Dr. “Hutton’s theory, namely, that the high antiquity “ascribed by it to the earth is inconsistent with that “system

“system of chronology which rests on the authority  
 “of the sacred writings. This objection would, no  
 “doubt, be of weight, if the high antiquity in ques-  
 “tion were not restricted merely to the *globe of the*  
 “*earth*, but were also extended to the human race:  
 “that the origin of *mankind* does not go back beyond  
 “six or seven thousand years, is a position so involved  
 “in the narrative of the Mosaic books, that any thing  
 “inconsistent with it, would no doubt stand in opposi-  
 “tion to the testimony of those ancient records. On  
 “this subject, however, geology is silent; and the his-  
 “tory of arts and sciences, when traced as high as any  
 “authentic monuments extend, refers the beginnings  
 “of civilization to a date not very different from that  
 “which has just been mentioned. On the other hand,  
 “the authority of the sacred books seems to be but  
 “little interested in what regards the mere antiquity  
 “of the earth itself; nor does it appear that their lan-  
 “guage is to be understood literally concerning the *age*  
 “of that body, any more than concerning its *figure* or  
 “its *motion*. It is but reasonable that we should extend  
 “to the geologist the same liberty of speculation,  
 “which the astronomer and mathematician are already  
 “in possession of; and this may be done, by supposing  
 “that the chronology of Moses relates only to the hu-  
 “man race.” See *Playfair’s Illustrations of the Huttonian*  
*Theory*, §. 125. This is the vindication which the learned  
 Professor opposes to the charge alluded to; and though  
 I am not prepared to subscribe generally to the system  
 he defends, I cannot but agree with him in believing  
 that the *chronology* of Moses relates chiefly, if not ex-  
 clusively, to the *human race*. Professor Robinson seems  
 to be of the same opinion, in his *Proofs of a Conspiracy*;  
 where speaking of Voltaire’s confidence in the phe-  
 nomena of the earth being in contradiction to the  
 Mosaic writings, and the several disputes upon this sub-  
 ject, he says, “For my own part, I think the affair is  
 “of little consequence; Moses writes the history, not  
 “of this globe, but of the race of Adam.” *Postscript*,  
 p. 544. 3d edit. As to the particular epochs of the  
*revolutions* of our globe, I fully conceive, that two at  
 least are ascertainable, viz. the first previous to the in-  
 troduction



introduction of the Protoplasts, if that was not the original creation of this planet; and the second the deluge of Noah.

I know that many divines, and many philosophers, have thought it not allowable to refer the æra of the creation of our globe to any period beyond that supposed to be fixed by the introduction of the race of Adam; and some have imagined it to be wrong, not to include in this account even the whole of the visible universe; (see *Jamieson on the Use of sacred History*, vol. i. 163.) I know that Origen imputes to Celsus, who professed to believe that the world had been subject to *many* revolutions, a design to have it believed that the world was not created, lib. i. p. 16. *edit. Cantab.* But I must agree with Professor Playfair, that there is a great difference between doubting of the precise æra of the beginning or end of the world, and asserting, that it had no beginning, and will have no end. But to prove, that the idea of a pre-existent state of the earth, is no *new* invention to meet the objections of *modern* theorists, or evade their calculations, I might refer to a work published by a M. Engel, in which he conceives that the *angels* inhabited the earth *before man*; an opinion which even M. de Luc seems inclined to countenance; see his *Lettres sur la Terre et l'Homme*. And our celebrated chronologist, Mr. Jackson, explains the passage of the earth being "without form and void," Gen. i. of its being for the time void of *inhabitants*: and he further supposes it possible, that the chaotic state of the earth might not be its first creation, but the dissolution of a former state, whose period was determined, in order to a new formation of a different system. And he likewise thinks, the *angels* might have been the inhabitants of the *pre-existent orb*. See his *Chronological Antiquities*, vol. i.

Whether this was so or not we shall undoubtedly never know, unless God is pleased to reveal it to us; which we may not expect *here*, and hereafter it may be no such subject of curiosity. I do not think philosophers have hitherto by any means *proved*, that the first creation of the globe must *unquestionably be referred* to a period more remote than the origin of the present race of mankind: and if they ever should prove it, I certainly think

think the Bible does by no means contradict the possibility of such a system of things. "Immo licet me  
 "non lateat," says a sensible writer, "esse pios, pa-  
 "riter et eruditos viros, qui sacrum historicum mundi  
 "creationem non tam φυσικῶς quam ἠθικῶς descripsisse  
 "existimant; ego tamen verbis ejus unice inhæreo, et,  
 "si *modum creationis* percontari pengas, ingenue fateor,  
 "nihil me habere, quod tibi reponam, nisi illud effa-  
 "tum divi Pauli, Πῶς εἰ νοῦμεν κατηγρίσθαι τὰς αἰῶνας ῥήματι  
 "Θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκφαινομένῃ τὰ βλέπομενα γεγεγενῆαι."  
 Heb. xi. ver. 3. "Otiosa enim est apud antiquos quosdam  
 "Ecclesiæ Patres disputatio, annon mundi hujus partes  
 "et regiones superiores, ac ille præcipue, quem angeli  
 "inhabitant, beatissimus mundus orbi nostro per ignota  
 "multa sæcula præextiterit? Otiosa etiam Cartesiana  
 "hypothesis, quasi paratus jam et omnibus vitæ com-  
 "modis instructus orbis, in aere per multa sæcula flui-  
 "taverit ante, quam Adam, primus ejus incola, a Deo  
 "ad illum habitandum conderetur. Ecquid, quæso, si  
 "hæc omnia cognita penitus atque exploratissima ha-  
 "beremus, meliores inde reddi possemus? Sed in illo,  
 "quem Moses nobis in sua cosmopœio insinuat, con-  
 "ceptu, quod *Deus universum hoc ex nihilo condiderit*, ni-  
 "hil otiosi latitat. Potius hic omnia ad pietatem, omnia  
 "ad religionem conspirant. Quantam enim divinæ po-  
 "tentiae admirationem conceptus hic in animis nostris  
 "excitare debet? Quantum timorem erga potentissi-  
 "mum *Numen* nobis inspirare? quantum fiduciam nos-  
 "tram in DEUM acuere? et profecto, idea, quod DEUS  
 "vastum hunc terrarum orbem *ex nihilo* produxerit,  
 "quod *voluntas* ejus, quæ, ut ita dicam, *unico verbo FIAT*  
 "*declarata* fuit, tot innumeris, ut philosophi loquun-  
 "tur, *modificationibus*, et partium, quibus componitur,  
 "dispositionibus non *possibilitatem* tantum sed *existen-*  
 "*tiam* dederit, longe major est, quam ut humanus in-  
 "tellectus pro dignitate illam assequi valeat." Vid.  
*Præfationem Christi. Ludovic. Scheidii ad Protogæam cele-*  
*berrimi Leibnitii.*

Page 280. note (4).

*The rapid progress lately made—in mineralogy and che-  
 mistry has led many to suppose, that the times are peculiarly  
 favourable for such enquiries and speculations.]* Professor  
 Playfair

Playfair concludes his *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory* with a note expressly on "*the Prejudices relating to the Theory of the Earth*," at the same time endeavouring to shew, "that the mass of geological knowledge is now in that state of fermentation, from which the true theory may be expected to emerge." P. 516. If this is really the case, I wish all theorists may, as the learned Professor himself directs, keep to their object, and not attempt to *explain the first origin of things*. See p. 511.

I have said so much in the preceding notes upon the invincible obstacles, which seem to stand in our way in enquiring into the nature of the physical operations that have taken place in time past in the body of the earth, that for fear I should be thought to have any unreasonable prejudice against geological speculations in general, or to depreciate the manifold and important discoveries of the age we live in, I shall beg leave to state, that my only object is to secure that respect to the Bible, which I think philosophy can never be able to shake.—Though the Mosaic cosmogony, and history of the first ages, is simple, and free from all physical explanations of things; yet some few points are touched upon, which if philosophy shall not approve, it may not be admitted, I think, to contradict: as for instance, Gen. i. 9. is I think sufficient authority for us to believe that unquestionably such was once the condition of this globe, that its superficial parts at least were in a state of fluidity; and as all our observations tend to shew, that our strata were formed under the water, my faith in this point would never be shaken by any philosophical calculations to prove the contrary: for though it should be shewn ever so clearly that, according to our present knowledge of the solubility of mineral substances, it must have required to hold in solution the spheroidal shell of the earth, 625 times its bulk of water; (see Playfair, 493;) yet I should conclude, that, by some circumstances or other unknown to us, the mineral bodies of the globe were then rendered soluble in proportions different from those which our experiments discover to us. And, I think, our most recent discoveries in this line would particularly authorize such a supposition. To take two instances from the Huttonian

nian theory. To account for the existence of Kilkenny coal, of all others the most destitute of bitumen, this theory supposes it to have been fused with an entire absence of pressure: whereas to account for pyrites, the same system supposes them to have been formed by fusion under a strong pressure, by which its sulphur, a substance at least as volatile as bitumen, is kept in combination with the iron. Now these substances have been found in conjunction. The inference is plain. Again, an objection has been made to the igneous origin of granite, from the circumstance of the crystals of quartz and feldspar mutually impressing each other: whereas our experiments formerly taught us to believe that these two minerals were fusible at very different temperatures: it has since however been discovered, that the case is otherwise, when they are reduced to powder; by which small change of circumstances, the feldspar is made to act as a flux on the quartz. This point has been ascertained by Sir James Hall's experiments, and I think by M. d'Arcet also; see his *Mémoire sur l'Action d'un Feu égal, &c.* p. I. §. 49. referred to by M. de Saussure, *Voyage dans les Alpes*, vol. i. 166. I think therefore, even if we had not the authority of so great a naturalist as Mr. Kirwan for such a conclusion, we might reasonably insist upon the supposition, which I have expressed in Mr. Kirwan's own words, in the Sermon; namely, that the chaos, whenever, or how often soever, it may have existed, may have been at the time "a more complex menstruum than any that has since been known." *Irish. Phil. Transf.* vol. vi. Professor Playfair himself acknowledges that one of the most important principles involved in Dr. Hutton's theory was till lately, not only unknown, but could not be discovered; namely, the detention of the aerial fluid in limestone exposed to the action of fire, under circumstances of great compression. Now let us only suppose this discovery never had been made, what false hypotheses might have been framed as to the operations of nature in time past! Red porphyry, M. le Comte de Buffon tell us, is composed of an infinite number of prickles of the species of echinus, or sea-chestnut. They are placed pretty near each other, and form all the small white spots which are in porphyry. Who would not  
upon

upon such authority have determined porphyry to have been of aqueous origin, and to have contained marine reliquiæ? M. de Sauffure thought he had clearly discovered the whole history of subterraneous fires, when the Canon Ricupero assured him, that Ætna had thrown out abundance of pyrites: he was undeceived when he discovered them to be only crystals of schorl. But the worthy Canon himself would not be convinced of the mistake; and thus the *past* operations of nature became liable to such misrepresentations, as obliged the able naturalist, to whom we owe the fact, to record it, though at the hazard of exposing a very worthy man and very zealous observer.

Now though all our late discoveries and experiments undoubtedly tend to secure us more and more from errors of this nature, and therefore geology may be said to be greatly advanced; yet certainly before Philosophy may be allowed to contradict Revelation, we have a right to insist upon such a correct and precise knowledge not only of the probable, but of the *possible* circumstances, under which nature may have acted in time past, as no progress in human knowledge can afford us an expectation of; while the discoveries we make daily in chemistry, of the infinite ways in which the combined actions of different substances may be modified, should serve to convince us, that after all the researches we can possibly make into the primitive, or even into any remote state of the globe, our conclusions may be fallacious; for causes may have operated then, which operate no longer, or under circumstances which may never again occur. Now among other things, the time or period of such operations must be for ever uncertain; for we know, more than ever we knew before, that every operation depending on the action of fire, on the solution of substances, and above all on the developement of elastic fluids, may have been accelerated or retarded, increased or diminished, by such a variety of accidents, as is past all calculation; and therefore I think we may agree with M. de Luc, that “*time may never be substituted for causes*;” and that we had better not have recourse to *time indefinite* to account for any geological phenomena, till we are able to point out some specific and determinate effects that have been

been produced within a given space of time.—There are many very important points which remain to be ascertained, and which are particularly still in dispute between the Vulcanists and Neptunists; such as the diminution of the general quantity of the aqueous fluid, from the decomposition of water, and other causes; a fact pretty generally admitted; and which perhaps the discovery of the formation of water from the combustion of the inflammable and vital airs, may render more uncertain than ever. The different effects of quick or slow refrigeration of fused matters, is a point not ascertainable, or seems to be so. The non-existence of air in lavas, and its existence in almost all, if not every fossil, presents many difficulties, as well as the circumstance already noticed, of the evolution or detention of volatile matters under different circumstances of pressure. These notions of the difficulty of judging of past operations are not taken up by way of *evasion*, any more than other observations I have ventured to make: I find it to be the opinion of *others*, and to have been advanced where there was no question of theology to interfere. The author of the Comparative View of the Huttonian and Neptunian Systems, very justly, I think, remarks, “that when we consider what he has been at  
 “the pains to examine into, viz. the influence of ag-  
 “gregation in preventing solution, the power of tem-  
 “perature in promoting it, the incalculable effects  
 “resulting from the exertion of complicated affinities,  
 “and the possibility of substances being compounds,  
 “which our imperfect knowledge ranks as simple, we  
 “can have no hesitation in admitting the conclusion  
 “which each separately establishes, that fossils *may*  
 “*have been* formed by water, though *apparently insol-*  
 “*uble in that fluid*. And if an induction from facts shall  
 “render probable their aqueous origin, their *present*  
 “insolubility will form no objection of real force.” This is only advanced indeed in regard to one point in geology, namely, the solubility of quartz; but I think it applies to all. The Huttonians may think such an argument a *geological* evasion: but I am sure it is no *theological* one; for, it must be remembered, much that Moses relates is miraculous; that is, he speaks of miraculous interpositions on the part of God, in the revolutions

lutions that have befallen the globe; it is therefore no wonder that the physical *possibility* of them is not clearly to be seen; and as to the *probability* of their having been *miraculous*, the difficulties that for ever stand in the way of such researches, and the endless disputes they give rise to, must surely be admitted to be no contemptible proofs of the very fact.

Page 283. note (5.).

Though no such analysis has been at all effectual to the enabling us in any one instance to produce such substances, by any mixture of the assigned ingredients.] M. Delomieu, in his paper "*Sur les Pierres composées et les Roches*," in the *Journal de Physique*, insists upon it that we can have no knowledge of the specific chemical operations which took place at the birth of our globe, it being impossible to *recompose* any one stone after the most curious and nice analysis: and this certainly appears to be a fair conclusion to draw, as I have already intimated. The theory, of which I have given a sketch in my Sermon, has for its author a M. C. Schneider, and it was published at Leipzig in 1802, under the following title: "*Die Geognosie nach Chemischen Grundsatzen*," i. e. Geognosy (or Geology) explained on the principles of Chemistry. I only know it from some extracts which I have seen, and I would by no means refer to it upon so partial and imperfect a knowledge of it, if my purpose was only to expose it; but being founded on the celebrated scheme of Buffon, viz. that of deriving our planetary system from the shock of a comet upon the body of the sun, I have the more particularly referred to it, because this very supposition seems to be as strong an instance of the gross mistakes we are liable to fall into, by stepping an inch beyond what facts will bear us out in, as any circumstance whatsoever. Dr. Herschel's papers in the *Philosophical Transactions*, on the sun's heat, must be now pretty generally known: but, independent of these, the nature of the sun has been much too long a matter of doubt to justify any persons assuming its ignition, as a foundation for a new theory. I have already had occasion to advert to this in my book on the *Plurality of Worlds*; see pp. 122—128; which I am sorry to have occasion to refer to so often; but

but these notes being already much longer than I expected, I do not like to transcribe it, though it is particularly applicable to the subject we are upon: see also *Wallerius*, sect. vii. and *Lambert's System of the World*, ch. iv. To shew however how easy it is to make a world, I shall give one specimen here of M. Schneider's method. After having determined with Buffon, that our globe was struck from the sun by a comet, he thus proceeds methodically to arrange matters. "*L'atmosphère chaotique de la comète coula autour du globe métallique ardent, et fut mêlée avec les exhalaisons vaporeuses: la solution des alkalis et des terres fut décomposée par l'acide carbonique: ceci dut donner bientôt une coagulation du fluide, dans laquelle les parties homogènes s'agrégèrent, et le fluide expansible devint un liquide: par ce liquide le noyau métallique fut éteint, mais il ne cessa pas d'agir: il cessa de décomposer l'air avec lequel il ne venoit plus en contact; mais il commença à décomposer l'eau par sa chaleur. Une oxydation fermentante fut produite, comme dans les ruines brûlantes des maisons consumées, et qu'on éteint par l'eau; l'odeur brûlante indique l'oxydation. De cette manière, non-seulement l'eau a diminué, dans le fluide chaotique, mais il s'en est séparé encore plus d'acide carbonique et méphitique et de principes aqueux, &c. &c.*" I forbear to proceed, because I am confident it would be to no purpose. Lord Shaftesbury long ago prepared a rod for such world-makers. "We have," says he, "a strange fancy to be CREATORS.—Every sect has a recipe; when you know it, you are master of nature; you solve all her phenomena; you see all her designs, and can account for all her operations; if need were, you might perchance too be of her laboratory, and work for her: at least one would imagine the partizans of each modern sect to have had this conceit. They are all Archimedes's in their way, and make a world upon easier terms than *he* offered to move one." *Moralists*, Part I. sect. 1. In regard to the theory we have just had occasion to notice, M. de Luc has admirably observed, that we may in vain challenge M. Schneider to produce stones by such processes as he has been at such pains to describe, because, no doubt, he would always allege, that he had no  
fragment



*fragment of the sun, or tail of a comet, to go to work with; and there could not be a better burlesque upon the whole system. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?" Job xxxviii.*

*Page 285. note (6).*

*Why is there so little said of second causes in this part of the Mosaic records?]* We might surely add, why do we read so little, or rather nothing, of causes entirely unnatural and monstrous, if Moses borrowed, as some would insinuate, from Pagan mythologies?—The sobriety of the sacred text upon many topics is a strong proof of its inspiration, when we consider what incredible stories the *Talmud* and other writings of the Jews contain. This is the more particular, as the latter have been made a reason for *suspecting* the Pentateuch, &c. of containing exaggerations and interpolations. See *Monthly Review of Dr. Jamieson's Use of Sacred History*, Aug. 1804. The canon of Scripture was complete before the *Tanaim* or *Mishnical Doctors* began to add their traditions to them; see *Prideaux's Connection*, vol. ii. 67. The Rabbins adopted *Indian fables*; see *Wilford on Egypt and the Nile, Asiatic Researches*, vol. iii.

*Page 289. note (7).*

*Though, for what we know, derived, as they allege, from the East.]* M. Mallet, in his remarks on the *Edda*, would derive the names of the days of the week from the *East*, with the other doctrines of the Celts: his principal object indeed is, to identify the *Scandinavian* and *Oriental* mythologies. It is certainly very probable, that we do derive the names of our days from the East: see upon this subject *M. le Gentil, Mémoires de l'Académ.—Sciences*, 1771. Part II. *Maurice's Indian Antiquities*, vol. v. *Halbed's Preface to his Code of Gentoo Laws*; *Kindersley's Specimens of Hindu Literature*.

Page 290. note (8).

*The hebdomadal division, though originally of divine institution.]* Dr. Geddes conceives the six days creation to have been expressly invented by Moses to account for the Jewish *sabbath*. We might reasonably ask, what then could be the true account? It is much better said by Professor Jenkin, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, book ii. c. 9, "If God saw fit to appoint one day in seven to be a day of *rest*, this was sufficient reason for the assignment of six days to the work of creation, independent of all other reasons." Some have imagined, and among others St. Austin, (*de Civit. Dei*, lib. ii. c. 6.) that the division of the work of creation into six days, was an invention of Moses to accommodate himself to the dull minds of the Jews; and that this idea receives confirmation from Gen. ii. 4, 5, &c. where Moses appears to collect the whole again into the compass of *one* day. But what bungling work would this be, to use artifice, and then betray himself! There is something very extraordinary in the institution of the *sabbath*, as to both its moral and physical effects; and it is not unreasonable to suppose, with Professor Jenkin, that God might have been graciously pleased to conduct his own operations after a method, which should serve for ever as an exemplar and model for the works of man. It has always struck me as a remarkable circumstance, that Apion, who seems to have spared no pains, nor scrupled any misrepresentations, to invalidate the antiquity of the Jews, when he expressly touched upon the circumstance of their *sabbath*, (*Josephus contr. Ap.* lib. ii.) and went out of his way, to invent a paltry reason for their observation of the *seventh* day, should not have insisted upon the higher antiquity of the hebdomadal reckoning. This he would surely have done, had it been a point at all capable of proof in those days, or had it even been suspected; especially if there had been any grounds for what Dion Cassius asserts, lib. xxxvii. namely, that both the hebdomadal reckoning, and distinction of days, was derived from the Egyptians; for this would have much better suited Apion's argument, (which was designed to prove that the Jews derived every thing from Egypt,) than a frivolous critique  
on

on the term *sabbath*. But there is another circumstance which strikes me, upon this head, namely, that Apion, in his strange attack upon the Jewish sabbath, clearly acknowledges the seventh day to have been originally a day of rest. Now it is remarkable, that this also seems to have descended with the hebdomadal mode of reckoning, as Philo observes; for after noticing the backwardness of all nations to adopt the customs of their neighbours, he writes, 'Αλλ' οὐχ ὧδε τὰ ἡμέτερά ἔχει πάντας γὰρ ἐπάγεται καὶ συνεπιστρέφει, βαρβάρους, Ἕλληνας, ἡπειρώτας, νησιώτας, ἔθνη τὰ ἐῷα, τὰ ἐσπέρια, Εὐρώπην, Ἀσίαν, ἅπασαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, ἀπὸ περάτων ἐπὶ πέρατα· τίς γὰρ τὴν ἱερὰν ἐκείνην ἐβδόμην ἐκ ἐκτείνηκεν, ἌΝΕΣΙΝ ΠΙΟΝΩΝ καὶ ΡΑΣΤΩΝΗΝ αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς πλησιάζουσιν, ἐκ ἐλευθέροις μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ δούλοις, μάλλον δὲ καὶ υποζυγίοις διδῶς; φθάνει γὰρ ἡ ἐκκεχειρία καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀγέλην, καὶ ὅσα πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν γέγονεν ἀνθρώπου, καθάπερ δούλα θεραπεύοντα τὸν φύσει δεσπότην, φθάνει καὶ πρὸς δένδρων καὶ φυτῶν ἅπασαν ἰδέαν· οὐ γὰρ ἔρνος, ἢ κλάδον, ἀλλ' ἢ δὲ πέταλον ἐφείται τεμεῖν, ἢ καρπὸν ὀντιναῶν δρέψασθαι, πάντων διαφερόμενων κατ' ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν, καὶ ὥσπερ ἐλευθερίαν ἀγόντων, ΚΟΙΝΩ ΚΗΡΥΤΤΜΑΤΙ μηδενὸς ἐπιψαύοντος. Περὶ βίβ. Μωσ. 447, edit. Paris, 1552. See also Euseb. Evang. Præpar. l. xiii. 12. where there is as much in regard to the universal sacredness of the seventh day. Now when we consider that Plato was for referring the origin of all festivals and days of rest, to the institution of the gods, moved thereto by pity for those that were born for painful labour, we may, I think, well conceive the hebdomadal mode of reckoning had the very origin Moses assigns to it. Plato's expressions are curious, "Θεοὶ δὲ οἰκτεῖραντες τὸ πῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπίπονον "πεφυκὸς γένος ἈΝΑΠΑΤΛΑΣ τε αὐτοῖς τῶν ΠΙΟΝΩΝ ἐτά- "ξατο τῶν ἐορτῶν ἀμειβὰς τοῖς Θεοῖς." De Leg. lib. ii. If we put then these things together, and consider that the Jewish reckoning of their days may be said to have been strictly hebdomadal, that is, they were named only according to their order, as first, second, third, &c. and every seventh day alone was distinguished by a title, and that title significative of rest—see Josephus cont. Apion, and Antiq. Jud. lib. i. Parkhurst's Heb. Lexicon, &c. a circumstance which Apion seems to have paid regard to, even while he was endeavouring to find another origin for the term itself, and which, from the account of Philo, appears to have been generally

rally transmitted with the hebdomadal mode of reckoning; while Plato expressly refers the stated days of *rest* in the Pagan religions, to the gods, *in commiseration of the labours of man*; we can scarce, I think, forbear to regard the *sabbath* as the true cause and origin of the hebdomadal division of time; more especially if it was observed by the Patriarchs, which I think is scarce to be doubted; see *Patrick on Gen. ii. 3*; and hence possibly all the mystery concerning the number SEVEN, which seems to have been a puzzle to the world almost as long as it has endured. I know some are still for referring the hebdomadal reckoning, to the lunar revolutions of 28 days, which were adopted in the East, and which led to the subdivision of four weeks of seven days each, named after the planets. This would include something of astronomy, and something of idolatry; but the circumstance of the seventh day being a sabbath, or day of *rest*, would still remain to be accounted for. And this institution is all we have to do with. Tacitus, in his strange conceit about the Jews, that they meant to do honour to Saturn, by keeping Saturday holy, notices its *sabbatical* character, “*Septimo die otium placuisse ferunt.*” *Histor. lib. v. c. 4.* It is curious, that the Christians in Tertullian’s time should be accused of worshipping the sun, from their observation of *Sunday*; and that the Jews in Tacitus’s time, for a similar reason, should be suspected of honouring *Saturn*: but the one error may well serve to explain the other.

Page 291. note (9).

*Depends on speculations, which, however cautiously conducted, may never be allowed to disprove a fact, capable of almost positive demonstration.]* Dr. Toulmin, whose two works on the *antiquity* and *eternity* of the world I have before had occasion to mention, with an inconsistency which, it seems, he was himself unable to discern, in order to prove the great antiquity of our globe from effects, *slow, progressive, and uniform*, (for this is the chief drift of his argument,) presents us with many curious and well authenticated accounts of the amazing effects of *volcanoes, earthquakes, and inundations*. From these we learn, that when nature even now acts upon a  
great

great scale; so far from requiring ages upon ages to produce a habitable world, or destroy one already inhabited, she can in not many *days* send forth from the bowels of the earth, matter that would extend *more than four times round the globe*; which is the amount of Borellus's calculations of the lava that had flowed from *Ætna* in the eruption, 1669. We learn from other accounts, that *thirty days* only are requisite to form an island six miles in diameter, or indeed only the half of this time, that is, fifteen days, to elevate from the bottom of a sea three hundred and twenty yards deep, an island nine miles long, four and a half broad, and which rises 360 feet above the water. We should be careful surely, from the testimony only of these few facts, how we pretend to assign any fixed time for the works of nature in time past. Dr. Toulmin relies much on Mr. Brydone's celebrated *data* for calculating the age of the world from the conversion of lava into vegetable mould: but since this fact was received as an undoubted principle to judge from, it has been, unluckily for these system-framers, discovered, that some lavas contain ingredients, disposing them to this process much sooner than others, so that no certain conclusion can be drawn from this test. See *Watson's Letters to Gibbon*; and *Kirwan on stony Substances, Irish Phil. Transf.* vol. v. This circumstance is the more particular, because it seems, in one instance, to correspond with Dr. Toulmin's own ideas. I shall state the very case he adduces, and the reflections he makes on it. "The late Emperor of Germany, in order to satisfy his curiosity in so important a particular, having first obtained permission from the Grand Signior, caused some piles of wood to be drawn up, on which the bridge which Trajan had thrown over the Danube had been founded. They examined attentively these wooden piles, and observed that the petrification was advanced no more than three fourths of an inch in fifteen hundred and some odd years. From this circumstance they *concluded* that a piece of wood of equal thickness, and forty feet in length, would be petrified an inch in twenty ages; and would employ, to arrive at its total transmutation, ninety-six thousand years. And from hence, say they, we may judge of

“the time that any petrified trees discovered in the body of the earth have been buried!” Now, says Dr. Toulmin, and I think he is very right, this reasoning is far from being conclusive. For, “in certain circumstances and situations, petrification may be supposed to advance in a manner totally different, and with much greater rapidity, than in the waters of the Danube.” So much depends on *circumstances and situation*, in all the operations of nature, that, without the precise knowledge of both, it is absurd to rely on calculations founded entirely on *data* of our own invention. In this reflection I might also boast of having Dr. Toulmin on my side: “How absurd,” (says he upon one occasion,) “and fruitless, every recourse to calculation on the subject of the world’s and nature’s first existence!” And so say we: but then Dr. Toulmin would have his calculations as well as others; and they appear to have so outrun all his expectations, that not being able to stop, after making the world inconceivably old, he determined at length that it must have been eternal.

Page 295. note (10).

*The effects—as related by Moses—have regard only to the power and providence of God; which those must have leave to measure by their own Reason, who have so little Reason as not to see the absurdity of it.]* We cannot dispense with observing, says Buffon, that Burnet, Woodward, Whiston, and most of these authors, have committed an error which deserves to be cleared up; which is that of having looked upon the deluge as possible by the action of natural causes, whereas Scripture presents it to us as produced by the immediate will of God. *There is no natural cause which can produce on the whole surface of the earth the quantity of water required to cover the highest mountains: and if even we could imagine a cause proportionate to this effect, it would still be impossible to find another cause capable of making the water to disappear.* I like his caution about meddling with a miracle: but I still think natural causes might have been made use of. At least I cannot help disregarding entirely all calculations to the contrary. An universal deluge, says M. de Voltaire with the utmost confidence, is *impossible*; the  
 sea

sea *might* gradually, he tells us, have overflowed the continents; but then it *must* have taken up as much as two million two hundred thousand years, to do it completely. *Philosoph. Dict.* art. *Deluge*. I think Dr. Halley was as able to calculate as Voltaire; and he has ventured to assure us, that if, at the time of the deluge, the centre of gravitation was by divine power removed towards the middle of the then inhabited parts of the world, a change of place but the two thousandth part of the radius of this globe were sufficient to bury the tops of the highest hills under water. *Misc. Curios.* vol. i. *Disc. on Gravity*. Reason answering reason, says Sir Walter Raleigh, all the waters mixed within the earth are fully sufficient to cover the space of 30 miles in height. The extravagant altitude of hills he was willing to allow for. This may be fanciful; but certainly many as grave and sober calculations have been made on the one side as the other. There is a very ingenious one, by Sir Henry Englefield, to be seen in *Geddes's Version of the Bible*, Gen. vii. 20; a calculation which might have sobered the scepticism of the critic, had he not been particularly inclined to dispute all the facts related by Moses. The author of the Pentateuch certainly hints, at least, at the operation of natural causes; and, so far from thinking them not sufficient, or that there was a want of water to have gone further, had it been necessary, he particularly tells us, “the  
“fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven  
“were stopped, and the rains of heaven restrained:” which plainly intimates, that whatever secondary causes God was pleased to employ to bring the deluge on, they required a check from proceeding further than was necessary.

When we argue against any reputed acts of Providence, surely for our own credit we ought to be certain that we have a full comprehension of the several circumstances that require to be considered. Those ancient philosophers who contended that the torrid and frigid zones were uninhabitable, fancied they had found a fair objection against the providence of God. But how insignificant do all their reasonings now appear, since we know that these large portions of the globe are not only habitable, but that God has so dis-

posed matters, as to render the former at least in many respects pleasant and delightful! Lucretius was one of those philosophers alluded to; and so very confident was he that he knew perfectly how to argue the matter, that he begins the subject with an "ausim confirmare"—

"Hoc tamen ex *ipsis Cœli rationibus* ausim

"Confirmare—

"Inde duas porro prope partes fervidus ardor,

"Affiduusque geli casus, *mortalibus aufert.*" Lib. v.

See also *Aristot. Meteor.* lib. ii. c. 5. Pliny has the same, only he contradicts himself in other places. They might reason truly after all, as a very learned writer has observed, "in regard to the ordinary effects of the sun's presence or absence: but there is a concurrence of several other things, which temper the air, which they could not understand." *Orig. Sac.* Part II. 91. How much more just must this remark appear, now we know, that the heat of the sun's rays depends on the modifications they become subject to in their passage through the atmosphere, and at the surface of the earth! If we look back to many old objections advanced against the truth of the Mosaic and Christian revelations, we must acknowledge, that the objectors were not competent to judge of the subject; and let us beware lest the same should prove to be the case with us. Even the Ark, upon which so much has been said, has as many calculations in its favour, as against it: and some very curious ones: see *Burgh's Dignity of Human Nature*, p. 465. and *Hartley on Man*, p. 371. "So," says the latter very learned author, "that what was thought an objection in this particular, is even some evidence."

We are undoubtedly arrived at one certainty in regard to the possibility of an universal deluge, whether our calculations will prove the fact or not: we know that the sea has one time or other covered all our continents, and deposited regular marine reliquæ, to the height of 14190 English feet above the level of the sea. *Hist. de l'Acad. des Sciences*, 1770. *Playfair's Illustrations*, p. 200. Now if we enquire of philosophers, how it happens that the sea no longer overflows these parts,  
and



and in what manner it *can* have abandoned its ancient bed; if some tell us, that it could not have retired suddenly, others will as confidently assure us, it could not have retreated gradually; and therefore I must confess, that I have long been satisfied, let what will become of the physical possibility of an universal deluge, that this very circumstance of the sea's retreat is, in respect to the utmost efforts of human knowledge, (to discover the exact state of the case,) *miraculous*; and as one miracle is as credible as another, I am quite ready to believe *that*, which is confirmed by many strong circumstances in the history of man, which is expressly recorded as an act of God's providence, and which is so consistent with the natural appearances of the body of the earth, that (whether philosophers can find water enough, or not, to cover our globe, in the common storehouses of nature) we cannot possibly doubt the general fact of the water's having covered the continental parts of the earth, though Moses could not have been acquainted with the evidences *we* have for the fact, even had he been a professed geologist.

Page 296. note (II).

*The catastrophe of the deluge, for what we know, may be fully sufficient to account for all those surprising circumstances of fossil bodies found in places where no correspondent animals or vegetables now exist.]* I have already observed, in Note (3), that we are not to attribute to the Mosaic deluge the deposition of *all* the marine reliquæ we find in our strata; and therefore I hope I shall not be suspected of a desire to solve every difficulty by a miracle, to the exclusion of all examination and enquiry. Of things possible, we are certainly not competent judges; but of what is probable, we may be allowed to form conjectures. That our strata have been formed under water seems an unquestionable fact; and under water abounding in marine animals of different descriptions, cannot be doubted. That much vegetable matter has been overwhelmed also seems certain; and therefore we must conclude, that at one time or other the sea has covered the continental parts of the globe, subsequently to the existence of animals and growth of vegetables: and we are therefore certainly inhabiting

inhabiting "a dry land," which has undergone great changes. Why should we wonder then to find things in the bowels of the earth indicative of such changes? "When we are informed, that the earth which we now inhabit is the *burying-place* of a former earth, it is as reasonable, that we should dig up the remains and ruins of it, as that we should find the bones and coffins of former generations in the earth of a church-yard." *Jones's Sermon on the Natural History of the Earth*, &c. We read of great changes, we have the evidences of such changes under our feet; and yet shall we suffer nothing to solve our doubts, but our own surmises and theories, founded on the common course of things? Whereas the very circumstance that such changes have happened, as we are unable to account for according to our present notions of things, should make us very diffident of assigning causes at random; much more of disputing a record, which expressly tells us of a different state of things. Whether Moses had ever told us so or not, our own observations would now serve to convince us, that as our continents are evidently in a postdiluvian state, there must have been also an antediluvian state of things, in which nothing perhaps was exactly as we see it now. We have the testimony both of sacred and profane history, to the fact of men's lives having been formerly much longer than they now are: this would seem to indicate of itself very important changes in the physical constitution of the globe, though it is not within the bounds of probability, that we should ever be able to trace what those changes have exactly been. Nor do I think it will ever be more possible for us to account exactly for the remains of tropical animals now found near the polar regions. The only question concerning them seems to be, whether they lived and died where we find them deposited, or whether they have been violently transported thither by the waters of the deluge. Mr. Kirwan has espoused the latter opinion, in opposition to some of the most eminent of his contemporaries: he apprehends, that at the time of the deluge an immense torrent flowed northward, carrying with it the products of the tropical countries. See his Paper in the 6th vol. of the *Irish Transactions*.

Those

Those who have imagined they lived and died where we find them, have generally concluded, that the climate has undergone a change; but this seems now to be thought unnecessary. The body of a rhinoceros has recently been discovered, so little changed, that we must substitute one wonder for another, it seems, and rather believe that tropical animals could formerly endure a Siberian climate, than that a body buried in a warm climate could have resisted putrefaction. See *Playfair's Illustrations*, pp. 473, 474. The same phenomenon is supposed to invalidate every hypothesis of a violent transportation; as the body could not have resisted the destructive effects of such an inundation. But without pretending to settle these differences, I must confess, I should rather incline to think the circumstances of the globe changed, than the nature and constitution of these animals. And though I am convinced by no hypothesis, yet I do not see why the Huttonian theory, as Professor Playfair insists, is the only one that can resolve our doubts upon this head; or why this single instance should seem so calculated to exclude every other hypothesis. I do not see why even the rhinoceroses found in Siberia may not have enjoyed there a much higher temperature, during their lives, and yet their bodies, buried at the time of the deluge, or since, been exposed to cold sufficient to preserve them from putrefaction. I only speak of the possibility of things; and so far, I must say, M. de Luc's theory seems the least exceptionable, by connecting both these facts; for he supposes, that, by the sudden sinking of the sea, the level of which is always the sensible base of the atmosphere, lands, which formerly occupied the lower regions of the air, were raised to a much colder region. There is no doubt, but that this may have happened; and though perhaps it is no nearer the exact truth than other hypotheses, yet it is certainly strictly philosophical; considering that the effect of the sun's rays is now well known to depend so immediately on the condition of the atmosphere, and the state of things at the surface of the earth. That such changes do take place upon a much smaller scale, and more gradually, I have shewn in the Sermon, by a reference to many authors; who describe things

things differently from what we perceive them to be now. If past changes seem to have been more rapid and more extensive, we certainly read of correspondent catastrophes. The Chinese, in their account of the deluge, have actually preserved a tradition, that at the time of the deluge the heavens sunk lower towards the north. See *Faber's Horæ Mosaicæ*. See also the Appendix to *Douglas's Dissertation on the Antiquity of the Earth*.

M. de Luc very judiciously observes, that we are still too ignorant of the composition of the atmosphere, to speak decisively upon such subjects; and I doubt we are much too ignorant of many other things, to be able to solve various geological phenomena, especially such as we are speaking of: for how do we know what specific causes may have operated in the body of the earth, to retard or prevent the effects of putrefaction in the body of the rhinoceros alluded to? which is acknowledged to be an *instantia singularis*. We happen to have an apparent cause in the coldness of Siberia; but this is far from being a key to all our difficulties, as every one must perceive. If it tells us how the dead body has been preserved, it by no means informs us how the living body was enabled to exist. We must still acknowledge some great change; and the only questions will be, when did this happen, and how did it happen? Upon both these subjects there is as much discordancy of opinion, as upon any other; some making the present state of things to be very ancient, and others comparatively recent. M. de Luc has certainly distinguished himself most by his enquiries into the recent origin of our continents; his researches being directed principally to five classes of phenomena: the deposited materials of vegetation continually accumulating; the change of vegetables into turfy earth; the diminution of fertility on the high mountains, from the accumulations of snow and ice; the depositions of the waters of the mountains, and the substances, which the rivers carry to the sea: but all his facts adduced to prove the low antiquity of our continents certainly deserve to be well considered.

I have already given one extract from M. Dolomieu, in confirmation of M. de Luc's hypothesis of the low  
anti-

antiquity of our continents: I shall transcribe two more, together with a similar testimony on the part of M. de Saussure. They must be well known to naturalists, but not so generally known, perhaps, to theologians; who, without any means of verifying such facts from actual observation, should at least be freed from all alarm arising from the extravagant calculations with which the world have been amused, and in regard to which I have endeavoured to shew, first, that they must all be, in the nature of things, extremely precarious; secondly, that they do not appear immediately to affect the Scripture history of *man*, even if they should seem to be well founded; and thirdly, that they are disallowed by many very eminent and respectable naturalists. In *Rozier's Journal* XL. M. Dolomieu, in his Paper *sur les Pierres composées*, &c. thus expresses himself: "Je dirai donc avec M. de Luc, l'état actuel de nos continents n'est pas ancien; je penserai avec lui qu'il n'y a pas long-temps qu'ils ont été donnés ou rendus ainsi modifiés à l'empire de l'homme." And again, "Je dirai aussi qu'il n'y a point de mesure pour le temps dans les époques antérieures, et que l'imagination peut y prodiguer des siècles avec autant de facilité que les minutes." *Ib.*

M. de Saussure's testimony is to the following effect: "Les blocs de pierre, dont est chargé le bas de ce glacier, invitent à une reflexion assez importante: lorsque l'on considère leur nombre, et que l'on pense qu'ils se déposent et s'accumulent à cette extrémité du glacier à mesure que ces glaces se fondent, on est étonné qu'il n'y en ait pas des amas beaucoup plus considérables: et cette observation d'accord en cela avec beaucoup d'autres, donne lieu de croire, comme le fait M. de Luc, que l'état actuel de notre globe n'est point aussi ancien que quelques philosophes l'ont imaginé." *Voyage dans les Alpes*, vol. iii. 29. I know there are philosophers, perhaps as eminent, who may be surprised to see observations revived, which they apprehend their theories have effectually contradicted. I can only judge for myself; I have carefully examined all that have come in my way, and I confess I see no reason whatever for withholding the evidences I have adduced.

As to the question concerning the specific cause of such changes as have happened, it has been common to refer them to a change in the position of the axis of the globe; a circumstance I have noticed in the Sermon. But some very eminent astronomers, and among these MM. Cassini and Le Gentil, have declared it to be their opinion, that the deluge did not occasion any change in the axis of the globe, or at all affect the celestial movements: and I believe there is in *Rozier's Journal* a Paper by the celebrated M. Lalande, expressly to *prove* this. Whether it did so happen, or that the centre of gravity was altered, as many others have supposed, I cannot pretend to judge; but I must notice, that Dr. Toulmin, who believes that the positions of the axis of the globe may have been changed, insists upon it, that if this change has taken place, it *must have been* an event of "a *slow* and *gradual* progression." We need only ask, why so? and I ask it the more particularly, because the same dogmatical writer professes to think, that every thing related of an universal deluge must needs impress us with insurmountable incredulity: "In short," says he, "they never can be reconciled, never can be thought reconcileable to Reason, by the sensible and enlightened part of the human species." And yet he is disposed to think the position of the axis of the globe has been changed; which, for what we know, may have been, and in the estimation of many sensible and very curious writers actually was, the very cause, under the providence of God, of the other changes at least, that took place at the time of the deluge; only he is *certain* this could not have happened quickly or suddenly; and there we must leave him.

As to the extinction of animals, now found in a fossil state, though a curious circumstance, I cannot see that it furnishes any positive argument, in regard either to the high or low antiquity of the globe. For though it may be intimately connected with the other physical changes, which the globe has undergone, it tells us nothing with regard to the particular period of such changes. M. de Luc notices the *succession* of different species of organized bodies to be found in our strata, many of which are not now to be met with. And as  
his

his hypothesis is founded on the supposition of successive precipitations from a liquid, he conceives, that the determining causes of such precipitations wrought such changes in the remaining sea, and in the atmosphere, as materially to affect the animals inhabiting them; and even to occasion the extinction of many, as of the *cornua ammonis*, *belemnite*, &c. This is undoubtedly very plausible, and relates to a difficulty too often overlooked. See also the *Protogæa* of Leibnitz, §. 26. The exact periods of such operations still remain inscrutable, though M. de Luc's *epochs* of nature (for he also conceives the six days of Moses to have been six *periods*) are certainly by no means so extravagant as M. Buffon's.

The remains of marine animals we know to be convertible into a mineral substance, of great use and importance in the economy of the world; and therefore man may have been as much benefited by their extinction, as by their existence. Their great abundance during the period of the formation of our strata, may reasonably be thought a special act of God's providence; and as we are taught to believe, that the waters existed before the dry land of the globe, their pre-existence is highly probable; and it is remarkable, that in this particular all our geological enquiries tend to confirm the Mosaic account. As to the extinction of *terrestrial* animals, this may also have happened, and certainly seems to have happened, in some instances, by a change of climates; but some may become extinct by accident, and I think this a circumstance deserving our consideration.

M. de Sauffure thinks it probable, (*Voyage dans les Alpes*, vol. iii.) that both the *chamois* and the *marmotte* will soon be extinct; and we know, that in the accounts of some of the Roman triumphs and festivals, we read of many *camelopards* exhibited for the amusement and wanton sport of the people: an animal now so rare, as scarcely ever to be seen or known. The possibility of the extinction of any species of animals, if the world has endured for a vast succession of ages, much more if it was designed to endure for ever, is a circumstance, which may afford much matter of speculation to philosophers. In the three instances above,

it would not be difficult to *measure the time*; at least between the great *abundance* of certain species; and such a state of rarity, as borders upon extinction. In the mean time, no new animals are brought into existence to supply their places, nor any provision, that I know of, made for such a renovation of things. This may surely not be considered as affording any argument in proof of the great antiquity of the present state of things, when we find, from the fossil remains of animals that are dug up, many species are already become extinct; and we have certain proof, that many are proceeding to extinction, not imperceptibly, but rapidly.

I have already had occasion to notice the expence and consumption of metals and fuel, without any adequate means of renewal discoverable. I believe our own country would supply instances among the animals, correspondent to the above. Not to dwell upon the extinction of *wolves*, which was brought about by design, many species of wild birds are every day becoming more rare, as quails, bustards, the wood grouse, or cock of the wood, &c. If it should be said, that these wild animals are diminished by the depredations of man, and that they are not missed in consequence of the greater increase of domesticated animals; yet both these circumstances being immediately connected with the progress of society and civilization of man, become in themselves chronometers by no means despicable: they point to an end, and surely also to a beginning. Those that are only found in a fossil state, give intimation of a former state of things, and a revolution of great extent; all which we have recorded. Those whose decrease and extinction are measurable and assignable, seem so connected with the population of the world, and the progress of society, as to keep pace with both. What may be renewed or multiplied by art and care, for the use of man, may be long continued; but nature seems evidently to point both to a beginning and an end, by no means so distant from each other, as some seem to suppose. Though calculations can never determine what must depend only on the will and providence of God, yet the waste and positive destruction of many consumable commodities, (some of which, as metals, are thought to owe their production to



to convulsions, which have shaken the very foundations of the earth; see *Playfair*, 254, and *Wallerius*, §. xxiv.) added to the visible decrease and probable extinction of wild animals, seem to point to a period not very distant, when, to repeat M. Dolomieu's expression, our present continents "ont été donnés ou rendus *ainsi modifiés* à " *l'empire de l'homme*."

Page 298. note (12).

*While the fact itself undoubtedly stands corroborated by many collateral testimonies.*] There is no fact of antiquity, perhaps, of which such a variety of proofs can be adduced, as of the deluge. It is interwoven with all mythologies, and directly alluded to by many ancient historians. Besides the references already adduced, see *Revelation examined with Candour*, Dissertations xiii. xiv. and *Dr. Jamieson on the Use of Sacred History*, vol. i. Disquisition i.; where the Pagan confirmations of this event, as well as of the creation, are not merely referred to, but very ingeniously, and without extravagance, reconciled with the Mosaic records. That author also shews, that what the Pagan accounts omitted was exactly what Moses, as an inspired writer, was likely to be commissioned to record, as God's warning to the world, &c. not noticed by Berosus, in his account of Xithuthrus.

Page 302. note (13).

*But which, besides all other testimonies, the face of the whole globe, and the observations of naturalists, have been since found, in a most surprising manner, to corroborate and confirm.*] Mr. Hume, speaking of the Pentateuch, observes, that it is not corroborated by any concurring testimony. Surely, that the traditions of all nations, and the records of all succeeding ages, and all subsequent discoveries, should generally concur with the facts reported by Moses, is the most convincing testimony we could require, considering the nature of those facts. Rousseau also is for insisting on *universal signs*, as a test of a Revelation. Now we may surely assert, that we have such in the testimonies alluded to; and much stronger than those on which he would found his Natural Religion. The latter have continually been mistaken

and misunderstood : but the defect of all contradictory evidences in regard to the facts and events recorded by Moses, historical, miraculous, and natural ; as well as the confirmation they have constantly received, from the *face of nature*, the reports of travellers, and the consent of naturalists, may well be adduced as signs, “ qui  
“ font de tous les temps, et de tous les lieux, égale-  
“ ment sensibles à tous les hommes, grands et petits,  
“ savans et ignorans, Européens, Indiens, Africains,  
“ Sauvages.” *Emile*, vol. iii. 91.

---

## S E R M O N VII.

---

JUDE, ver. 10.

*But these speak evil of those things which they know not.*

IN my former Discourse I have endeavoured to shew, as briefly as I could, but with a view to particular questions, and such as appeared to me of the first importance, that in the three branches of Metaphysics, Physics, and History, notwithstanding the acknowledged advancement of human science, Reason cannot with propriety, at this day, boast of any advantages obtained over Revelation. I shall now proceed, under the head of CRITICISM, to notice some things, which the conduct of our opponents renders peculiarly necessary.

Under the head of Criticism, then, we have three things to complain of: first, the contempt thrown on Learning and Criticism in  
A a 2                      general,

general, for particular ends : secondly, the frequent abuse of Criticism and authorities : and thirdly, demands made upon us, which we are under no obligation to answer.

And first, as to the contempt thrown on Learning and Criticism in general. The author of the *Age of Reason* has ventured to assure the world, that only *living* languages are of use in the advancement of knowledge<sup>(1)</sup>; and we know, that, in this expression, the chief knowledge he had in view was such as he especially thought conducive to the overthrow of revealed Religion. A much more eminent writer<sup>a</sup> on the continent, with exactly the same views, but with an air of levity quite unbefitting the subject, assures us also, that in the day of judgment we shall not be questioned, whether we have mistaken one Hebrew letter for another, as a *Caph* for a *Beth*, or a *Yod* for a *Vau*. We know the impression that such insinuations must be calculated to make on the minds of a large majority of the people ; and therefore it may not be amiss to shew, that as far as Criticism and Learning are become neces-

<sup>a</sup> Voltaire.

fary to the promulgation and due understanding of our most holy Religion, they have been *especially rendered so* by the conduct of those very persons, who, for reasons, no doubt, well known to themselves, thus pretend to object to their utility and importance. For though there can be no danger from such vain and confident assertions, and from such quarters, to the cause of literature in general; no danger, surely, of any being turned aside from the important study of the dead languages by the cavils of a Paine, or the sarcasms of a Voltaire; yet, in respect to Revelation, and Christianity more particularly, such insinuations are always likely to receive support from a common prejudice among believers themselves; a prejudice continually made a handle of by Deists; namely, that a religion especially designed to be preached to the *poor*, must have been so communicated, as to require no extraordinary capacity, nor any great extent of learning, in those who were to derive from it the blessings and benefits of instruction, of hope, of comfort, and salvation!

But all this may be granted, and yet Learning and Criticism lose nothing of their im-

portance; while it will be easy to shew, that such disparagement and contempt of both, as I have above alluded to, have an immediate tendency to deprive us of the only weapon, which can effectually defend, not the learned only; but the *people at large*, from the delusions of sophistry, and the misrepresentations of ignorance; from both of which, it is not too much to say, the world has never been more in danger, than during this boasted age of Reason. For though Criticism and Learning are treated in this contemptuous manner by Deists, when they interfere with their views; yet they do not disdain to apply them in support of their own cause, to the great abuse of both, and the greatest possible injury to the cause of truth. The very work entitled the *Age of Reason*, which was expressly intended to be disseminated among all ranks of people, and would have been so, but for the timely and wise interposition of the Legislature, though certainly not either learned or critical in the strict sense of those terms, yet contained much reading misapplied, and many very ignorant attempts at Criticism, for the basest and most cruel purposes.

But

But a more appropriate example could scarcely perhaps be adduced, than in the case of the last writer I had occasion to mention. The unlearned will, no doubt, be easily persuaded, that it is unworthy of God's majesty and justice, to question any ignorant person concerning any doctrines he may have espoused, through the mere mistake of one Hebrew letter for another: yet very much more than what that author would represent to us may unquestionably depend on such an error; nor would it be difficult to shew at length, as a proof particularly applicable, that the very writer in question has much aggravated a very futile charge, which he has advanced against the *divine authority of the Bible*, by the unwarrantable insertion or misconstruction of one of the very letters he mentions<sup>(\*)</sup>, though he was himself perhaps quite unaware of this, and unaware besides, that it was an error in the translation he used. The injury done to the cause of truth is nevertheless the same; nor can such an error be accounted so venial a one, in a person who presumptuously undertook to instruct mankind better than the Bible itself, and would by his indecent cavils have

infinuated, that there is no utility in a branch of science, of which he was himself inexcusably ignorant, and which alone could have enabled us to detect (as has been the case in many instances) the falsehood of his assertions, and the sophistry of his arguments.

Again, nothing is more easy than to persuade the ignorant, that Learning and Criticism are unnecessary to the due understanding of the Bible; and yet, upon the very pretence of superior learning and wisdom, to pass upon them a new sense for every scriptural term that may be called in question<sup>b</sup>. A knowledge of the dead languages must necessarily be of the most essential use, where the living and vernacular tongues, into which they may have been translated, are thus liable to perversion and misrepresentation. It is scarcely possible to conceive, that any unlettered Christian could misinterpret the received version of the New Tes-

<sup>b</sup> See the IVth Part of *Edwards's Preservative against Socinianism*; his account of the figurative mode of interpreting Scripture, resorted to by the Socinians, and their great abuse of Scriptural terms.



tament, in regard to the important doctrines of redemption and atonement by the blood of Christ; especially when he had been in the habit of hearing or reading the ancient accounts of the Jewish sacrifices, and the Apostle's comparison of the Christian oblation, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But when men will come forward to assure them, that the redemption and atonement they there read of do by no means signify redemption and atonement by the blood of Christ, as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; and that not only the Greek terms for those expressions, but the Hebrew, from which they were regularly derived, or by which they must at all events be explained<sup>c</sup>, mean otherwise; and that neither the ancient Hebrew or Christian writers had any idea of such an atonement for sin; how would the truth suffer, if there were not some persons to be found, competently skilled in those languages, to investigate the original meaning and design of the sacred writers, as well as of the Christian Fathers

<sup>c</sup> See *Magee* on the term ἀμαρτία, in the 27th note to his first *Sermon on Atonement*.

and Jewish Rabbis ; and to certify the unlearned, that the common interpretation and sense of those expressions are what should be received, and such as may be safely relied on ; and that they were so used and understood by the very writers cited and referred to ! I am not merely supposing a case that might happen ; the case really has happened ; and I think I may with confidence refer at once to the valuable works of *Bull*, *Stillington*, *Leslie*, *Edwards*, as well as of our own cotemporaries *Horsley* and *Magee*, for such proofs of ignorance or prevarication, or both, on the part of *certain expositors of the Scriptures*, as must amount to a positive demonstration of the case. (³)

Who could ever suppose, that when our Saviour is said to have been *made man*, to have been *made flesh*, to have *taken our nature upon him*, to have *been born of a virgin*, and so forth, that the birth and subsistence of a mere human creature was intended ? Are those who have been taught to believe in the preexistence and divinity of our Saviour, to be robbed of their faith by the vain assurance, that these expressions are idiomatical, and not designed to express more, than

than that our Lord was born into the world like all other human beings<sup>d</sup>?

But indeed without the advantages of solid Learning and sound Criticism, to counteract and expose the ignorance or presumption of modern Deists, it is not the *character* of our blessed Lord only that may be misrepresented, but his *very existence* may be brought into question. It has been asserted in times past, that the greatest infidel that ever lived had never pretended to disbelieve that there was such a person as our Saviour Christ<sup>e</sup>: this was reserved for more modern times; for our own boasted times of Reason and knowledge. A foreign writer<sup>f</sup>, very popular, and still I believe living, has ventured to assert, that the existence of Jesus is no better proved than that of *Osiris*, or *Hercules*, *Fót*, or *Bedou*; and attempts are made, by a long criticism on the name of *Christ*, to persuade us, that our Saviour was no

<sup>d</sup> See in *Bishop Horsley's Tracts* his IVth Letter to Dr. Priestley, and the First Supplemental Disquisition.

<sup>e</sup> See *Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity*, Part iv. ch. 2. and *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, 5th edit. vol. ii. 365.

<sup>f</sup> See the Notes to *M. Volney's Ruins or Revolutions of Empires*; and Note (4) at the end of this Discourse.

other than the Indian *Vischenou*<sup>g</sup>; that the Hindu and Christian Trinities are identical; and that the whole of Christianity is derived from the books of the Mithriacs, and is capable of being resolved into an idolatrous worship of the visible Fountain of Light. He even cites the Christian Fathers in proof of this, and Tertullian in particular, whom he makes to say, that “ many suppose, with “ *greater probability*, that the *Sun* is our “ God; and they refer us to the religion of “ the Persians.” But when Tertullian is allowed to speak for himself, so far from *countenancing* any such opinion, we find him expressly pointing out the origin of their *error* and *mistake*; which was, that the Christians prayed to the *East*, and kept *Sunday* sacred; *Diem Solis*. All his arguments to prove our Saviour to have been the visionary Deity of India, turn on the etymology of the Greek title given to our Saviour, which he traces through the Sanscrit, Hebrew, Arabic, and even Spanish; wholly regardless all the while of *St. John's* etymology of the title, and of its intimate and

<sup>g</sup> I use M. Volney's spelling.

unquestionable connection with the Hebrew משיח; wholly regardless of his own favourite authority, Tertullian's express allusion to its proper and acknowledged signification, in his Treatise against Praxeas; wholly regardless of *his* open appeal to the public records of Rome, in attestation of the *birth, death, and resurrection* of our Lord<sup>(4)</sup>.

One such instance out of the very many that might be adduced, if the time would serve, of the great abuse of Criticism for the purposes of infidelity, may, I hope, be sufficient, not only to vindicate the use and importance of sound Learning, in these days, and especially of the knowledge of the dead languages; but to prove, that there never was a time when they were more indispensably necessary to the cause of truth in general. For whether the Bible be authentic or not, whether it be the work of man, or the word of God, it must equally merit to be protected from such misrepresentation and abuse, such gross perversion, and such freaks of fancy.

But sound Criticism is not only particularly wanted at present to secure us from the wanton attacks of Infidels; but for the  
purpose

purpose of maintaining and enforcing, even among Christians, the most important and peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. That of atonement in particular is still disputed, and every attempt made to explain away the most obvious passages that can be held to bear the smallest allusion to it; though if ever one event was explanatory of another, if any two incidents may be said to be connected with each other in the way of type and antitype, of shadow and substance, surely it may be insisted on, that the death of Christ, and the Jewish sacrifices under the law of Moses, were exactly so related to each other: nor can I think it possible for any truly candid, ingenuous, and unprejudiced person to deny the resemblance and analogy traced out at large by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews<sup>h</sup>. If the blood of Christ had no atoning virtue, if his death was not strictly sacrificial, what are we to understand by the ninth and tenth chapters of that argumentative and most instructive Epistle? The expressions are so clearly il-

<sup>h</sup> See also the references in the 27th note to the first of *Dr. Magee's Sermons on Atonement*, p. 142.

lustrative of all that we could possibly conceive of atonement and redemption through the blood of Christ, that if attempts had not repeatedly been made to explain away their literal meaning and genuine sense, by the most unwarrantable explications of them, one could scarcely suppose it possible, that the case could admit of a doubt<sup>i</sup>. But these expositors, when Criticism fails them, have also their recourse to *Reason*; and we are assailed with demands, which we are certainly under no obligation to answer or regard. Human Reason, admitted as a judge on such a subject, will, no doubt, find much to object to; for sin cannot be too easily pardonable, nor God too unconditionally merciful, for her purposes<sup>k</sup>. She will al-

<sup>i</sup> "That Christ suffered and died as an atonement for the sins of mankind, is a doctrine so constantly and so strongly enforced through every part of the New Testament, that whoever will seriously peruse those writings, and deny that it is there, may with as much reason and truth, after reading the works of Thucydides and Livy, assert, that in them no mention is made of any facts relative to the histories of Greece and Rome." *Soame Jenyns's Internal Evidence*, p. 29.

<sup>k</sup> Mr. Paine confesses, that he thinks it is "man's greatest consolation to believe, that he stands in no need of redemption."

ways fancy she renders God honour by every deduction she can make from the apparatus of redemption. She will have no blood to be shed by the decree of God ; she will not have the innocent to suffer for the guilty ; she will not have God to require atonement, or man to need it. But all *a priori* judgment of the case is superseded. We may not reason as to what might have been, when the Scriptures are admitted to be the word of God ; it is our part only to enquire what has been<sup>1</sup> ; to examine deeply and minutely into the history of sacrifices, the Jewish above all ; to take the account of our Saviour's ministry from the written records of it, from his own declarations therein transmitted to us ; and to weigh well the most extraordinary correspondence of doc-

<sup>1</sup> “ The Christian Religion is a Divine Revelation, of the evidences of the truth of which right *Reason* is to judge. The difference between the Socinians and our Churches on this article seems to be this : we apply reasoning to the *evidences* of Revelation, and they to all the *doctrines* of it. According to us, Reason has done its office when it has obtained evidence, that *God speaks* : according to them, Reason is to reject what *is spoken*, if it cannot comprehend it.” See Notes to *Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, vol. i. 153.



trine on this point, to be found in the two covenants.

This is not a question now determinable by any speculative views of the attributes of God, or the condition of man. It is a question, that has been before the world from its first creation. To be determined with precision, when the most obvious sense of Scripture is disputed, it requires a deep insight into the history and antiquities of the most remarkable people that ever lived on the face of the earth : it requires a most critical knowledge of the several languages in which the Scriptures were first written ; not merely to ascertain the doctrine said to be contained therein, for without perversion it is plain enough ; but to be able to detect and expose the various misinterpretations, which have been put upon the several terms applied to this great doctrine, as well as upon the several customs and ceremonies connected therewith : it requires a capacity of examining not only into the opinions of the ancient Fathers of the Christian Church, but into those of the ancient Jews also ; for all these have been summoned to give their

testimony, but often in a most unjustifiable manner.

I have enumerated these several requisites for the due understanding and decision of this particular point of controversy, not only to evince the absolute necessity of real Learning and just Criticism, but to shew, that so far from our having reason to apprehend any ill effects from the advancement of knowledge, in regard to such questions, we have certainly much more reason to complain of a great want and deficiency either of learning or honesty, in many who have of late rejected these doctrines without due enquiry, or attempted to explain them without a proper attention to the merits of the case; who have been convicted upon evidence the most clear, and proofs the most positive, either of ignorance as to the existence of ancient authorities, or prevarication in the use of them.

It would appear to be peculiarly providential, and may probably therefore enter into the very plan of divine Providence, that where things are at all capable of decision by sound Criticism, there has never been wanting

wanting a constant succession of learned men, duly qualified to controvert the many bold and dogmatical assertions, by which the ignorant are in constant danger of being confounded and misled. If we had no power of examining into the real merit of such assertions, we should be at this moment compelled to believe, that “*the doctrines of Atonement, Incarnation, and the Trinity, have no more foundation in the Scriptures than the doctrines of transubstantiation or transmigration*”;<sup>m</sup> that “there are very few texts that even *seem* to assert the pre-existence of Christ;” and that “on a full review of the religions of all nations, ancient and modern, we should find them utterly destitute of any thing like a doctrine of proper atonement.”<sup>n</sup> Assertions more completely unfounded could scarcely have entered into the mind of man; for in

<sup>m</sup> See *Priestley's Answer to Paine*. It has been well observed, that “the doctrines of redemption and grace appear very evidently to *deistical* writers to be the doctrines of the Bible, though some nominal Christians cannot find them there.” See *The Age of Infidelity*, Part I. 62. Mr. Paine could find them there, though Dr. Priestley could not.

<sup>n</sup> See note (3).

regard only to the latter, it is, in positive contradiction to what has been alleged, capable of the most certain proof, that all nations whatsoever before Christ, Heathens as well as Jews, universally held, that the displeasure of an offended Deity was to be averted by the sacrifice of an animal: nor are any of the other assertions less open to confutation, as has been amply shewn, by a learned Professor in a sister University, in a work which may well encourage us to hope, that assertions will never again be received as proofs, nor sophistry ever prevail over real learning°.

Connected with this doctrine of atonement is that most important doctrine of all, *the Trinity*. How much the *human Reason* has revolted against this doctrine, I need not say. She has thought herself competent entirely to set this aside, and to treat its defenders with the most ignominious contempt. If this doctrine had been entirely of man's invention, they might be allowed, in dissenting from it, to suspect the authors of

° *Magee's Discourses on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice*. London, 1801.

it of some affectation of mystery, and they might with the utmost reason be jealous of admitting any assumed equality with the supreme Father of heaven. But as a theological question, and it cannot be any thing else, this also now admits of no *a priori* judgment. None have any right to enquire of us, whether three persons *may* subsist in the unity of one essence, as a merely speculative doctrine: but as they, who from the first have held this doctrine, have asserted, that they find it in the Scriptures, the whole must depend on the interpretation of certain passages there: and as the appeal is open, it is absurd to presume, that there is no foundation whatever for such a doctrine to be discovered in the words of Scripture; for who could possibly be so senseless as to say such a doctrine was to be discovered there, unless they felt assured in their own minds, that the Scripture would, upon reference, be found to support them? I know nothing upon the face of the earth that could first have induced men to say, they believed in one God and a Trinity of Persons, if they regarded these two parts of their creed as

incompatible<sup>p</sup>; I know nothing that could have induced the believers in one God to worship Christ and the Holy Spirit, unless they believed them in some manner or other to be co-equal, and co-existent<sup>q</sup>.

The modern Unitarians, as they persist in calling themselves, still continue to assert, that the *mere humanity of Christ* is the *clear and indisputable doctrine of the New Testament*<sup>r</sup>. Surely then they must acknowledge it to be strange, that some of those, whom they most boast of, as advocates for the Unity, and adverse to the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, should yet have given a Trinitarian meaning to most of the passages insisted on; or a meaning certainly *incompatible with real manhood*; and that they should have found expressions in the Gospel leading them to imagine that "prayer and invoca-

<sup>p</sup> "If the Scripture had not told us of Three in heaven, we had never spoke of a Trinity." *Leslie*.

<sup>q</sup> Socinus acknowledged Christ to be an object of prayer, as being exalted to the dignity and majesty of *a true God*, (*Deus verus*), in reward of his obedience and sufferings.

<sup>r</sup> See *Priestley's History of Corruptions*, vol. i. p. 6.

“tion were due to Christ;”—“that he had  
 “a pre-existence;”—“that the Divinity was  
 “united to him, composing, together with  
 “his human soul and body, one Christ;”—  
 and that this Divinity was “the Supreme  
 “Being:” and yet these, without doubt,  
 were severally the tenets of Arius, Socinus,  
 Erasmus, Grotius, Petavius, Episcopius, San-  
 dius, Clarke, and Tucker<sup>t</sup>; all of whom are  
 claimed at least by the Unitarians of the  
 present day, as the friends of their party (<sup>s</sup>).  
 Shall we then be told, that the doctrines of  
 Christ’s pre-existence, divinity, and incarna-  
 tion, have no better foundations in Scrip-  
 ture, than those of transubstantiation and  
 transmigration? When our Saviour is repre-  
 sented as expressing himself so before the

\* See the extracts from the *Racovian Catechism* in the 1st vol. of *Leslie*, p. 219.

<sup>t</sup> Arius’s opinions are well known. Socinus *complains* of his being thought to deny Christ’s being a true God; “Quasi nos Christum verum Deum esse negamus, quod tamen a nobis non fit.” *Op.* tom. ii. p. 645. See also *Edwards’s Preservative against Socinianism*, Disc. I. pp. 9, 10. Erasmus in his *Paraphrase on John* i. 1. calls Christ *ex Deo vero, Deus verus*, and much more to the same purpose. For the tenets of Grotius, Petavius, Episcopius, and Sandius, see *Leslie’s IVth Dialogue of his Socinian Controversy*; of Clarke and Tucker, see note (5).

whole Sanhedrim assembled in council<sup>u</sup>, as that the Jews conceived he made himself equal with God, we may well conceive the expression recorded had this direct purport ; and *we* may surely be excused for thinking *the same* ; especially as our Saviour's own explanation, recorded by the same Evangelist, does not tend to convict them of an error in judgment. When he more openly declared, equally to the surprise and astonishment of the Jews, that He and the Father were ONE, and they drew the same inference they had done before ; namely, that he had *made himself God*, by this declaration ; is it to be considered as a mere random, irrational, unfounded interpretation, that *we* put upon the same words, especially when, as in the former case, our Saviour did not *deny* the propriety of the inference they had drawn<sup>(6)</sup> ? The question has been rendered intricate by the numerous discussions it has undergone : when our Saviour spoke himself to the point, he was so intelligible to the Jews, that they would have stoned him for blasphemy. This makes the question of

<sup>u</sup> See *Doddridge on John v. 17. Family Expositor*, sect. 47.



the Trinity a most awful and important one ; for the denial of it evidently tends to fix the charge of blasphemy on Christ. And this consideration should be uppermost in the minds of all those who engage in such enquiries.

Let them not fancy they are under any obligation to *explain* the Trinity, but under the deepest and most indispensable obligation to consider the true extent of our Saviour's meaning, when he claimed, in the presence of the Jews, this unity with the Father. Let them not suffer themselves to be led too far in the investigation of this most important question. Those who will still insist upon its being a contradiction, to acknowledge a Trinity in unity, must be contented with the answer provided for us in the Creed which goes by the name of Athanasius. *That* was written, whoever was the author, with a far better design than is generally imputed to it : it was in all likelihood intended not only to meet particular heresies and errors, but to *repel the charge of Tritheism*, alleged against the true believers. It was drawn up, no doubt, to shew, that they, who, *in their acknowledgement of Father,*

*ther, Son, and Holy Ghost*, either confounded the persons, or divided the substance, differed essentially from the true believers; and therefore that the latter of course were not obnoxious to any such charges: and as both these errors gave a handle to unbelievers, to accuse them of such “damnable “heresies,” (to use St. Peter’s own terms,) as either the denying the Lord that bought them, or of giving way to idolatry, the damnatory clauses, as they are called, whatever was their original object, must be held to express the horror with which such errors were viewed by the true believer, and the extreme danger of them. These may still therefore serve to shew, that the Trinitarians, in acknowledging the Divinity of Christ, think their doctrine grossly misrepresented, whenever it is so stated as to imply any thing contrary to the divine Unity; any thing bordering upon idolatry on the one hand, or a denial of Christ on the other (?): charges continually brought against them, and in terms that should preclude all further argument, if they were but true. For if there are really any persons capable of asserting, as it has been more than once alleged, that

that “ there are *three Creators*, and yet but “ *one Creator*\*,” such men need never be argued with; the proof of such an assertion would be entirely sufficient to preclude all reasoning upon the subject<sup>(8)</sup>. But after having said, as the Creed alluded to does say, “ that “ the *Godhead* of the Father, of the Son, “ and of the Holy Ghost, is One ;” to affirm further, that “ the Father is God, the Son is “ God, and the Holy Ghost is God,” is only to express the same thing differently, which it is a matter of absolute necessity to do, where we are at all obliged to shew, in what manner we believe *three to agree in one*. We have been forced, in this and many other instances, into a sort of *a priori* reasoning concerning the nature and moral government of God ; which, if left to herself, the Church would always with humility decline: “ For,” as a very able writer observes

\* *Lindsey on the Two Creations*, in the 2d vol. of the *Theological Repository*.

† “Οτι μὲν ὁ Θεὸς υἱὸν ἔχει, τοῦτο πίστευε· τὸ δὲ πῶς, μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖ· ζητῶν γὰρ οὐχ' εὐρήσεις. *Cyrill. Hierosf. Catech. xi.*

Πῶς γενᾷ τὸν υἱὸν ὁ Θεός, ἢ πολυπραγμονῶ. Καὶ πῶς ἐκπέμπει τὸ πνεῦμα ὁμοίως οὐ πολυπραγμονῶ· ἀλλὰ πιστεύω ὅτι καὶ υἱὸς γεννᾶται ἀρρήτως καὶ ἀπαθῶς, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκπορεύεται ἀρρήτως καὶ ἀπαθῶς. *Atbanasii Dial. I. edit. p. 40. Stephan.*

on another occasion, “ what God could or  
 “ could not have done it presumes not to  
 “ pronounce ; what God declares he *has*  
 “ done, that merely it asserts ; and on his  
 “ express word alone it is founded. But it  
 “ is to be remembered,” he proceeds to re-  
 mark, “ that on this, and on many other  
 “ occasions, that *a priori* reasoning, which so  
 “ frequently misleads those who object to  
 “ the doctrines of our Church, is imputed  
 “ by *them* to *us*. Not being themselves in  
 “ the habit of bowing with humble reve-  
 “ rence to the sacred word, they consider  
 “ not that we speak *merely its suggestions* ;  
 “ and that, if we do at any time philoso-  
 “ phize, it is but to *follow*, not to *lead*, the  
 “ meaning of Scripture.” And this was  
 the intention, no doubt, of the ancient  
 Fathers of the Church, whose illustrations  
 of their doctrine have been lately so offici-  
 ously brought forward to prove<sup>2</sup>, not the  
 insufficiency of human Reason to explain a  
 divine mystery, but that a divine mystery  
 incapable of being adequately explained,  
 and accounted for by human Reason, is

<sup>2</sup> See *Priestley's Early Opinions concerning Christ*.

therefore

therefore impossible : a conclusion which has been so often and so effectually refuted, as no longer to deserve our notice. The ancient Fathers never meant to inform us what the Trinity really was <sup>a</sup>, but only how it might in some degree be illustrated ; and, for this end, they certainly discovered many similitudes, which, though not strictly applicable, were sufficient to shew, that a Triune subsistence was not, in the nature of things, either an absurdity or an impossibility <sup>b</sup>.

As these Fathers of the Christian Church were frequently accused of having formed their notions of the Trinity on the model of the Platonic Triad of principles ; so, from what has since been discovered of a Trinity

<sup>a</sup> Εἰς Θεὸς Πατὴρ, εἰς Κύριος, ὁ μονογενὴς αὐτοῦ Υἱὸς, ἐν τῷ Πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ, ὁ παράκλητος. Καὶ αὐταρκες ἡμῖν εἰδέναι ταῦτα· φύσις δὲ, ἣ ἐπόσασιν μὴ πολυπραγμόνεις· εἰ γὰρ ἦν γεγραμμένον, ἐλέγομεν· ὃ γέγραπται, μὴ τοιμήσωμεν· αὐταρκες ἡμῖν εἰδέναι πρὸς σωτήριαν, ὅτι ἐστὶ Πατὴρ, καὶ Υἱὸς, καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα. *Cyrill. Hieros. Catech. xvi.*

<sup>b</sup> See *Huntingford on the Trinity*, §. xv. Bishop Beveridge is censured for such similitudes, in *Robinson's Notes to Claude's Essay*, vol. i. p. 17. but I think without reason. Though all such illustrations must be inadequate, as the Bishop of Gloucester observes, yet there is no harm in shewing, that in nature, and in human cases, unity and multiplicity may be combined, and often are so.

in the Oriental mythologies, some have been of late induced, perversely enough, to think, and *to assert* indeed, that we derive the doctrine entirely from thence; and, as I had occasion to observe before, that the Hindu and Christian Trinities are identical, and equally fabulous. We cannot be too particular therefore in satisfying ourselves, that the Trinity *is* the doctrine of the *New Testament*, prior to all other considerations<sup>c</sup>. Those that have no veneration for the character of our blessed Lord, must be left to their own notions: but even among Infidels, it must be confessed, that *many* have been found to bear the most willing and the strongest testimony to the purity and perfection, both of his life and doctrine, as represented in the Gospel<sup>d</sup>. Now it is principally from our Saviour's own declarations and conduct, that we deduce the doctrine of the Trinity: we know that he fell under the imputation of blasphemy for assuming

<sup>c</sup> How much the *Platonic* Trinity differs from the Christian, see *Bishop Burge's Sermon on the Divinity of Christ*.

<sup>d</sup> Mr. Paine professes the highest respect for the character of Jesus Christ. Rousseau's sketch of it, in his *Letter to the Archbishop of Paris*, is very striking and very just.

an equality with God, and that he did not repel the charge by any objections made to the interpretation put on his words; so that our notions of the Divinity of Christ are not founded on any such visionary basis as a mythological legend, or philosophical speculation, but admit of proof from his own personal declarations, attested and interpreted by living witnesses. It cannot in any manner be pretended, that the Grecian or Oriental Trinities admit of any proof so certain and direct. And as a *previous* question, I cannot see that we have any thing to do with any traces of a Trinity, that may be discoverable either among Jews or Pagans. After having commenced our enquiries with our Lord's own declarations, his own claim to a filial identity of nature with God the Father, and having discovered in the course of our researches, that however the Evangelists and Apostles have described him as a man, and the Prophets foretold him as such, they yet also all agree in ascribing to him the brightest characters of Divinity; after having taken into the account the peculiar form of baptism of our Lord's own institution; then we may be well entitled to

to

to regard every other intimation of such a mode of subsistence in the Deity, either among Jews or Pagans, but especially the former, as a remarkable confirmation of the Christian Trinity.

Whatever faint or imperfect revelations of it God might have vouchsafed from the first creation, we are to look chiefly to the New Testament for an account of the person and character of the Saviour of the world; and supposing the Trinity true, the fullest discovery of it might most fitly be reserved for the times of the Gospel: then it became as essential for man to know God's method of redemption and sanctification, as under the Law it had been of importance to him to have a revelation of his method of creation and providence. God foreseeing the need of such further discoveries in time, might well vouchsafe some intimation of such a mode of subsistence from the earliest times, as it would certainly appear that he had done<sup>e</sup>. So that in all likelihood, as has been conjectured

<sup>e</sup> See *Cudworth*, b. i. ch. 5. *Horstley's Tracts*, 40—45. and his *second Letter to Dr. Priestley*, p. 100. See also *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*, Letter xxxiii. and *Bishop Huntingford on the Trinity*, §§. xvi. xxv. xxviii.



and asserted, revelation and tradition were indeed the original sources whence both Jew and Gentile, both the philosophers of the West, and the mythologists of the East, derived whatever notions they appear to have had of a Trinity in Unity.

MAY THE ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD,  
WHO HAS GIVEN US GRACE IN THE CON-  
FESSION OF OUR FAITH, TO ACKNOWLEDGE  
THE GLORY OF THE ETERNAL TRINITY, AND  
IN THE POWER OF THE DIVINE MAJESTY TO  
WORSHIP THE UNITY, KEEP US STEDFAST IN  
THIS FAITH, AND EVERMORE DEFEND US  
FROM ALL ADVERSITIES !



## NOTES TO SERMON VII.

---

Page 356. note (1).

*THE* author of the *Age of Reason* has ventured to assure the world, that only living languages are of use in the advancement of knowledge.] To do Mr. Paine justice, he has not said this without stating his reasons; which are, "that there is now nothing new to be learned from the dead languages: all the useful books being already translated, the languages are become useless, and the time expended in teaching and learning them is wasted." Part I. of the *Age of Reason*, p. 37. But then, to do *ourselves* justice, we must not trust Mr. Paine too far, when he asserts, that human language may never be the "*vehicle of the word of God*," because of "the continually progressive change, to which the meaning of words is subject; the want of an universal language, which renders translation necessary; the errors to which translations are again subject; the mistakes of copyists and printers; together with the possibility of wilful alteration, &c." *Ib.* p. 19. If translations have been capable of conveying to us all that is useful in the writings of antiquity in so great perfection, as to render the study of the original writings altogether useless, then we may certainly be said to have the benefits of such an universal language as Mr. Paine thinks indispensably necessary to a divine Revelation: but if translations are so liable to error as he supposes, and copyists and printers subject to mistake, and the originals always in danger of wilful alterations, what can possibly secure us from such evils, but a critical knowledge of the original languages, and original works, wherewith we may compare the translations, and whereby we may be able to correct the mistakes

mistakes of copyists and printers, and to detect and expose all wilful alterations?

What an able critic Mr. Paine became, by trusting to translations, and neglecting the use and study of the dead languages, we may judge from his arguments about the book of Job. It is impossible to express the *course* of his *discoveries in Criticism* better than in the following few words of a very able writer who answered him; and who thus sums up his arguments: "The book of Job is a *Hebrew* translation from an *Arabic* original; because the *English* translation contains four or five *Greek* words." See *Age of Infidelity*, Part II. 41. This is literally Mr. Paine's argument. After adopting the opinions of *Aben-Ezra* and *Spinoza*, that it is a translation into Hebrew from another language, he adds, "the astronomical names, *Pleiades*, *Orion*, and *Arcturus*, are Greek, and not Hebrew names; and as it does not appear from any thing that is to be found in the Bible, that the Jews knew any thing of astronomy, or that they studied it, they had no translation for those names into their own language; but adopted the names as they found them in the poem." The English reader, who may have neglected the study of the dead languages upon the wise advice of Mr. Paine, (but indeed I hope he will have found very few such readers,) would be surprised to learn, that, so far from the Hebrews having been unable to translate these *Greek* names, the Greeks have appeared to be much more unable to translate the Hebrew. For let the real signification, or the derivation of the terms in Job be what they may, there they certainly are, in the original, in true Hebrew characters, Job ix. 9. כִּסְיִל, כִּימָה, עַשׂ—and not one word do we read of either the *Pleiades*, *Orion*, or *Arcturus*; though in Mr. Paine's *English Bible* (for when he wrote the second part of the *Age of Reason* he had one, and not before) no doubt he found the names as he writes them. But whoever was the author of the *Greek* version of the book of Job, he certainly knew so little which particular constellations were meant, that in the two passages where they are mentioned, he renders עַשׂ in the first by Πλειάδα, but in the second by Ἑσπέρων: and the author of the *Greek* version of Amos, (ch. v. ver. 8.)

ver. 8.) where two of the same constellations are again mentioned in the original, fairly leaves them out; as if he totally wanted some correspondent Greek terms. Nor indeed is the author of the Vulgate more uniform than the author of the Greek version, as to *wy*: he has *Arcturum* in the first instance, and *Vesperum* in the last: and as to the term כִּסְכָּה, he renders it differently in three different places. Mr. Paine's favourite commentator Aben-Ezra allowed no place at all for the Pleiades, but was for substituting the Hyades in their stead; another cluster of stars in the Bull. This is more upon the subject, perhaps, than the case required; though Mr. Paine's object was no less than, by this rare piece of criticism, to rob the Bible of the book of Job; and merely for this reason; that he thought it too good to be in such company. In his opinion it is deistical; but how Job himself could be accounted a Deist I know not, who was "*continually*" making sin-offerings for his family, lest some of his many "*sons should have sinned in their hearts*;" which certainly favours a good deal of an instituted method of atonement. Job i. 5. and xlii. 7. 8. See *Magee's second Sermon on Atonement*, and Note 23. p. 136. I shall advert to one more criticism of Mr. Paine's, suggested by another short remark of the same able writer already referred to.

Mr. Paine insists upon it, in the second part of the *Age of Reason*, p. 6. that Moses cannot be considered as the author of the Pentateuch, without rendering him truly ridiculous and absurd: for in the xiith chapter of Numbers, ver. 3. it is said, "Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were on the face of the earth." "If Moses said this of himself," says Mr. Paine, "instead of being the meekest of men, he was one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs." This is an old objection, as indeed all Mr. Paine's are, without exception. Now the author of the *Age of Infidelity* suggests, from the origin of the term *wy*, that this meekness of Moses was not so much a virtue as a weakness; and I must confess I think he is right: and though a dead language is here of use to illustrate the point, yet I think our own living language would supply an easy argument against Mr. Paine. There can be no doubt, from the context, that

the meekness here attributed to Moses had a reference to the resentment of wrongs. Now in the classification of the passions, some are allowed to be purely defensive, and designed for the security of the individual. On opening then the first book of morals that falls in my way, I read, that “if these passions are so weak as to prove insufficient for their end, as well as if they are so strong as to carry us beyond it, in both cases they are unfit to answer their original design; and therefore are in an unsound and unnatural state.” See *Professor Ferguson’s Elements of Moral Philosophy*. I apprehend therefore, that the meekness of Moses would in this particular instance rather imply that diffidence, which is opposed, not so much to haughtiness and pride, as to that resentment of injuries, which is sometimes both becoming and necessary. And if we consult the whole passage, we shall, I think, certainly conclude, that the interposition of the Deity upon the occasion was expressly connected with the *weakness* and *unreasonable* diffidence of his Prophet. See verses 4 and 14. It is thus that Cicero, where he recommends clemency, *meekness*, and gentleness of spirit, as virtues becoming a statesman, is particularly careful to add, that though meekness and clemency be laudable virtues, yet no further than as they leave room for a just severity, whenever the occasions of the public require it. “*Et tamen ita probanda est mansuetudo et clementia, ut adhibeatur, reipublicæ causa, severitas, sine qua administrari civitas non potest.*” De Officiis, lib. i. c. 25. Upon which Grævius has a note very applicable to the case of Moses. And Muretus has a good remark: “*Ut morositas odium, ita nimia facilitas contemtum parit.*” See Verburgius’s edit. Note 70. p. 3489.

I do not mean to deny, that meekness is allied to many virtues, and to some particularly conspicuous in the character of Moses; but in the passage alluded to, though without reference to the Hebrew it would seem as if an act of weakness had been most in the contemplation of the writer; yet a knowledge of the original must be necessary to determine this.

So far then from agreeing with Mr. Paine in the conclusion he draws, and which he has expressed so smartly in the following words; “The author is with-  
“ out

“out credit, because, to boast of meekness is the reverse of meekness, and is a lie in sentiment;” I should argue, that to acknowledge a *weakness* is a *virtue*, and therefore Moses was meek both in the good and bad sense of the term; and in this particular instance, perhaps, superlatively so. For what was the real case? Aaron and Miriam were disputing his *divine mission*; of which if Moses had been duly sensible, he should have suffered no private affections to incline him to compromise so great an insult to the *prophet of God*: but though he was therefore blameworthy, for such an ill-judged lenity and diffidence, and even thereby as it were confederate with Aaron and Miriam, as verses 4 and 14 would imply; yet, considering the near relationship of the offenders to him, it was certainly an amiable weakness, and, had not the honour of God, and the future authority of *his Prophet*, been so immediately concerned, no doubt a *venial* one. After all, it is in a *parentthesis*, and therefore might possibly have been added by way of note, such having been conjectured to have been the original way of writing notes; see *Age of Infidelity*, p. 17: and if so, whether it were a virtue or a weakness, Moses would have nothing to do with it.

In neither of the cases above can we say, that we have been *mised* by the translators. If they have mistaken the particular constellations alluded to in the first case, it is of no sort of moment; for if they were constellations, (which is not generally admitted, see *Parkhurst* under *וַי* II. and *Bates's Crit. Heb.*) whether Hebrew, Arabic, Grecian, or English, they are only mentioned to set forth the glory of God. In the last case, whatever idea we attach to the term meekness, we cannot be wrong in supposing it to have been a particular trait in the character of Moses: but as it certainly admits of two senses, or at least the virtue carried to excess may become a weakness, like many others, we cannot pretend to determine that Moses meant to *boast*, even if he himself was the very author of the words.

But where translators may not mislead, *interpreters* may; and if the dead languages, Learning, and Criticism were to be given up, I am confident we should

soon know as little of the word of *man*, in times past, as of the word of God. For let us suppose the Bible to be only an ancient book, but to contain things useful; and let us further imagine Mr. Paine to be persuaded, that the English translation was sufficient to communicate to him all that it was necessary for him to know of the Bible, and therefore that the Hebrew might be laid aside: now without dreaming of any such arguments and objections as Mr. Paine might in time to come choose to invent, the translators might reasonably have substituted the modern names of the most conspicuous constellations, for the three unintelligible terms, (for they are so in a great measure,) which occur in the original passages of the book of Job.

But how would Mr. Paine himself be confounded, (at least one would think it impossible it should be otherwise,) if, pretending to criticise the Bible, and to advance objections, which, according to his own expressions, “no Bible believer, though writing at his ease, and with a library of church books about him, should be able to refute,” (see the Preface to the second part of the *Age of Reason*,) he should, relying upon the translation, insist upon a difficulty in the Hebrew original, from which it should be found, upon examination, the Hebrew original was totally free?

If translations are so correct as entirely to supersede the use and study of the dead languages, which is what Mr. Paine insists upon in one place, then such translations should be implicitly relied on: but if translations are liable to be so faulty and erroneous, as he also strongly insists in another place, then no arguments should be deduced from them, but such as the originals would serve to support, as well as the translations. Mr. Paine confesses his own ignorance of the Hebrew language, (p. 54. Part II. of the *Age of Reason*,) and yet pretends to instruct us in the use of Hebrew terms; so much so, that in endeavouring to deprive us of all faith in the Hebrew Prophets, after insisting upon it, that a Prophet, a Poet, and a Musician, were synonymous, when he undertakes to determine the meaning and import of the *older* term SEER, for want of *Hebrew*, he fairly refers us from the *English* to the *French*: intimating pretty plainly, that he conceives it to have signified



signified no more than a wizard; though in the Hebrew there is a distinct term for the latter, and they are particularly enumerated (Deut. xviii. 10, 11.) among the *abominations of the heathens*. This is the more particular, because he pretends also, that the Jewish Prophets were not raised to a higher rank than that of wizards, but through the fraud of the *Christian Church*, and the ignorance and superstition of *modern times*: whereas nothing can be more distinguished, in the Old Testament, than the Prophets of God, and the wizards of the Gentiles. For in the same chapter of Deuteronomy already referred to, where wizards are denounced as among the heathen abominations, punishments are awarded to those who will not listen to and obey the Prophets of God. Nay, would he but have condescended to let the Bible speak for itself, which he never does, he would also have found, from the *same* chapter, that it was expressly to restrain the Jews from following after wizards and necromancers, and such sort of “conjuring, strolling gentry,” that the prophetic office was first established: upon which head Origen argues admirably against Celsus, that it was a matter of absolute necessity that they should have Prophets; “For,” saith he, “it being written in their law, that “the Gentiles hearkened unto *oracles* and *divinations*, “but God would not suffer it to be so among them, “it presently follows, Deut. xviii. 15. *A Prophet will “the Lord thy God raise up from the midst of thee, &c.* “Therefore,” says Origen, “when the nations round “about them had their oracles and several ways of divination, (εἴτε διὰ κληδόνων, εἴτε δι’ οἰωνῶν, εἴτε δι’ ὀρνίθων, “εἴτε δι’ ἐγγαστριμύθων, εἴτε καὶ διὰ τῶν τὴν θυτικήν ἀπαγγελλομένων, εἴτε καὶ διὰ Καλδαίων γενεθλιαλογούντων,) all “which were strictly prohibited among the Jews; if “the Jews had had no way of foreknowing things to “come, it had been almost impossible, considering the “great curiosity of human nature, to have kept them “from despising the Law of Moses, and apostatizing to “the heathen oracles, or setting up something like “them among themselves.” *Contra Cels.* lib. i. p. 28. edit. Cantab. See also Notes to Sermon V.

Mr. Paine tells us, indeed, that neither Seer nor Prophet ventured to meddle with any concerns, but those  
of

of the times then passing; and that their prophecyings had never any reference to any *distant future* time. This is easily said by Mr. Paine, and, according to his mode of *Criticism*, easily proved. The very remarkable prophecy of Isaiah concerning Cyrus is divided between the xlvth and xlvi chapters, as is well known: In the former part the rebuilding of Jerusalem only is mentioned; in the latter the conquests of Cyrus are foretold; and the circumstance of his being named in the prophecy so many years before its accomplishment, is expressly mentioned as the pledge of its truth. All this latter part Mr. Paine totally passes over; and, from the last verse of the xlvth chapter, takes occasion to declaim against “the audacity of the Church, and priestly ignorance,” for imposing this book upon the world as the writing of Isaiah; when, by their own chronology, he died one hundred and sixty-two years before the decree of Cyrus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem was issued. Indeed, we must acknowledge, that such ignorance and audacity would have exceeded every thing of the kind that we have since read of in the annals of the world. But Mr. Paine regards the decree of Cyrus as authentic. Now Cyrus was certainly neither an audacious churchman, nor an ignorant priest; he was the very person concerned; and by all accounts, (and it happens that we know a great deal of Cyrus from *profane* history,) he was too shrewd to be easily imposed on, and too great to impose upon others; nor was there a motive to induce him to do so in this instance. Cyrus himself then, in the very proclamation he issued upon the occasion, expressly acknowledges his sense of the truth of this prophecy, and adopts it as the motive for his clemency and indulgence to the Jews. See Ezra i. 2. See also *Josephus, Ant. Jud.* lib. xi. c. 1. “He caused it to be proclaimed,” says Josephus, “throughout all Asia, ὅτι ΚΥΡΟΣ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΛΕΓΕΙ: —ἐπεὶ με ὁ Θεὸς ὁ μέγιστος τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπέδειξε βασιλέα, πείθομαι τῶτον εἶναι ὃν τὸ τῶν Ἰσραηλίων ἔθνος προσκυνεῖ καὶ γὰρ ΤΟΥΤΟΝ ΠΡΟΕΙΠΕΝ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΩΝ, καὶ ὅτι τὸν ναὸν αὐτῷ οἰκοδομήσω ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ χώρᾳ.” This, says Josephus, he learnt from the writings of Isaiah, which had already been extant 210 years, 140 before the temple was destroyed; another material

material circumstance, which Mr. Paine totally omits. Indeed if dead languages are no longer of any use, living languages are as little so, while they are liable to be so grossly perverted, and so shamefully abused.

Page 359. note (2).

Nor would it be difficult to shew at length, as a proof particularly applicable, that the very writer in question has much aggravated a very futile charge, which he has advanced against the divine authority of the Bible, by the unwarrantable insertion or misconstruction of one of the very letters he mentions.] I do not design to make this a very serious point of criticism; for by some perhaps it may be thought to be no better than quibbling; M. de Voltaire's remark, besides, having too much of levity in it to be treated with great attention. But as his design was, like Mr. Paine's, to invalidate in every way possible the authority of the Pentateuch, it may be well to shew, that such flippancies are inimical to truth, and that the unwary and the ignorant may be grossly deceived by them. We shall not, says M. Voltaire, be questioned, in the day of judgment, whether we have mistaken a *Caph* for a *Beth*, or a *Yod* for a *Vau*. Let M. Voltaire then be more correct in his charges against the Bible; because, if it is quite a trifle to mistake one Hebrew Letter for another, the truth is more in danger of being perverted by such critics, than by all the priesthood, either of the Synagogue or the Church. M. de Voltaire has a long argument upon the *twenty-three thousand* men that fell by the hand of the children of Levi, in the case of the molten calf, Exodus xxxii. 28. M. Voltaire understood nothing of Hebrew; how much Greek he knew I cannot pretend to say: but it is certain, that, like a true catholic, he descended as low as Latin at least for the text of his argument: for in the Vulgate translation of the Bible, and the Vulgate only, (if we except the Arabic, which is not regarded of much authority; see *Whitby*,) the number of persons is really as he states, viz. 23,000; though in some copies it is more, even 33,000: but in the Greek version it is only *εἰς τριακίλις ἀνδρας*, about three thousand, as our version also has it. And this is in agreement with the Hebrew, כשלשת אלפי איש; only, unfortunately for M. Voltaire,

taire, somewhere or other there has happened a mistake about a *Capb.* The numeral power of this Hebrew letter is well known to be 20, so that here seems to be undoubtedly either an unwarrantable insertion, or a misconstruction of a  $\beth$ , as I have stated in the Discourse, on which the *credit of the Bible* is made to depend. It is certain there is a  $\beth$  in the original; but it is not a numerical, according to the ablest judges, but an adverbial prefix, answering exactly to the Latin term *circiter*, and which has been carefully preserved in the other versions of the Bible. I hope this will not appear trifling, when we have to do with such trifling critics. Had M. Voltaire been ever so little acquainted with Hebrew, and felt a real concern for the truth, instead of making us indifferent about such mistakes, he should have cautioned us against them; for it is notorious, that such mistakes are easy, from the great similarity of the letters; and whether the Bible be true or not, if M. de Voltaire thought it of importance to the world, that its credit should be impeached, he must be held to have acknowledged the use and importance of Criticism, even while he was abusing it, and turning it into ridicule.

M. de Voltaire was a bad or a very disingenuous critic in Latin, as well as Hebrew. In order to prove that the Jews were not the only people acquainted with the unity of God, he adduces the following line from Virgil, to shew that the heathens also worshipped *one* God, viz. Jupiter.

*Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere Deos.*

A Latin scholar must see that this line expressly asserts a *plurality* of *Gods*: but a plain Englishman would know nothing about it; nor yet a plain Frenchman; and therefore, in support of his argument, M. Voltaire makes no scruple to translate it,

*Soyez justes, mortels, et ne craignez qu'un Dieu!*

Surely, for the vindication of truth, the security of man, and even the honour of God, a critical knowledge of the *dead* languages was never more necessary. Bishop Warburton has noticed M. de Voltaire's great ignorance, in the 6th section of his fourth book of the *Divine Legation of Moses*, note (t); an ignorance always  
inex-

inexcusable in a person who pretends to tell the world so much, as he pretends to tell us in his writings, about the Hebrews, and Arabians, and Greeks, and Romans.

But it is not only for the purpose of detecting the fallacies and ignorant assertions of such writers as Mr. Paine and Voltaire, that Learning and Criticism are necessary: much greater scholars have descended to such low arts, as they ought certainly to be ashamed of. I blush for the frequent misrepresentations and prevarications, and *tricks* of such a writer as Mr. Gibbon: he has even condescended, as it would appear, to adopt the very misrepresentations of Voltaire; where he endeavours to disgrace Marcellus as the encourager of mutiny and sedition, because he would not be a soldier, on the *intolerant terms of worshipping the beathen idols*. Mr. Gibbon refers to *Ruinart's Acts of the Martyrs*, and Voltaire exactly agrees in misrepresenting the matter. Marcellus's own speech, as related in the *Acts of the Martyrs*, is exceedingly fine. Another instance of Mr. Gibbon's *artifice* (for it really is no less) is to be found in his account of the number of Christians at Antioch. To take their *number as low as possible*, he appeals to *Chrysostom*, to shew that they amounted to only one hundred thousand persons: "while," says he, "it is at the same time admitted, that the whole number of its inhabitants was not less than half a million." The passage from Chrysostom referred to he acknowledges he adopted from Dr. Lardner: *the amount of the population from John Malela*. Now it is curious, that in the same page from which Mr. Gibbon confesses he borrowed Chrysostom's account of the number of Christians, *his account also of the population* is to be found, amounting *only to two hundred thousand*. But, instead of taking St. Chrysostom's calculation in this last particular, he *prefers* John Malela's; an author, of whom, on another occasion, he is pleased to say, "the authority of that ignorant Greek is very slight." See the *Abbé Nonnette's Erreurs de Voltaire*, and *Obelsum's Remarks*, 3d edit.

It cannot but be regarded as a curious circumstance in the history of this age of Reason, that two of the ablest Sceptics it has to boast of should have been advocates

vocates for the exploded system of Pagan mythology : I mean Mr. Gibbon and Mr. Hume : the latter a professed admirer, (see his *Natural History of Religion*,) the former a ready apologist. I do not pretend to reconcile inconsistencies ; I know Mr. Gibbon in one place commends the superior intelligence of those “ wisest of the heathen,” whose “ secret contempt penetrated through the thin and awkward disguise of their popular religion.” *Decline and Fall*, ch. xv. But then, in another place, he speaks almost in raptures of the “ elegance” of their mythology ; “ the gaiety, cheerfulness, and splendour” of their festivals ; and the liberality with which they admitted foreign Deities and foreign rites, and which of course he admires as the extreme of toleration. But his partiality for the vain, fantastical, and often impious ceremonies of Paganism is by no means the greatest disgrace, which Mr. Gibbon has brought on this age of Reason. In his *Strictures on the Conduct of the Primitive Fathers of the Church*, he has tacitly recommended and approved such a base and unmanly submission of Reason, as is truly disgusting : and if other Deists have a just regard for the honour and privileges of human Reason, as they pretend, Mr. Gibbon ought to rank very low in their estimation. I am truly ashamed when I read his laboured vindications of Pagan toleration, accompanied with the most insidious representations of the commendable, upright, honest, and honourable resistance, which the primitive Christians made to all the fooleries and absurdities of idolatry : a resistance the more to be admired, when contrasted with the mean compliance of those “ wisest of the heathens,” who, “ when they knew God,” as Mr. Gibbon pretends, “ glorified him not as God ;” who “ professing to be wise became fools ;” — “ who changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things ;” — “ who changed the truth of God” (if they really had a due apprehension of it, as Mr. Gibbon insists) “ into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the CREATOR, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” A resistance the more manly and creditable, the more apparently trifling were those acts of submission, which might have saved their  
lives,

*lives*, at the expence of their veracity, their faith; and their integrity. “An *easy pardon*,” says Mr. Gibbon, “was granted to *repentance*; and if they consented to “cast a few grains of incense upon the altar, they were “dismissed from the tribunal with safety and applause.”—An *easy pardon* granted to *repentance*!—Repentance? For what? For worshipping and adoring the true God, in preference to stocks and stones; murderers, adulterers, and tyrants? “A few grains of incense?” Incense! to whom? to *Jupiter, Mars, Venus*, and a whole rabble of such Gods and Goddeses!—“Dismissed with “applause!”—human, popular, vulgar applause! instead of—the approbation of an all-seeing God—the satisfaction of their own consciences—the consent of their own reason—the admiration of every honourable and honest man! Hear one of these very martyrs describe their conduct, and the motives by which they were governed; and which Mr. Gibbon is pleased to represent as obstinacy and folly;—“Ἐξείαζόμενοι, ἐκ ἀρ-  
 “νέμεθα, διὰ τὸ συνεπίστασαι ἑαυτοῖς μηδὲν φαῦλον, ἀσεβὲς δὲ  
 “ἡγούμενοι ΜΗ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΑΛΗΘΕΤΕΙΝ, ὃ καὶ ΦΙΛΟΝ  
 “ΤΩ ΘΕῷ γινώσκουμεν.” *Just. Mart. Apol.* i. But indeed it is but too evident, that Mr. Gibbon must have yielded to some very disgraceful prejudices, when he censured, as he has done, the noble fortitude of the first Christian martyrs. Upon occasion he could see the foul crime of dissimulation in as hateful a light as ourselves; for though he could justify the conduct of the Pagan philosophers for their conformity to a system of religion, which in their hearts they despised; and censure the behaviour of the martyrs, as obstinate and perverse; yet he seems to have thought very differently of any such compliance with *Christian* rites. Thus, for instance, he speaks of Julian’s occasional conformity, after he became an apostate: “But as every act of *dissimulation*  
 “must be painful to an ingenuous spirit, the profession  
 “of Christianity increased his aversion for a religion,  
 “which oppressed the freedom of his mind, and coin-  
 “pelled him to hold a conduct repugnant to the *noblest*  
 “attributes of human nature, SINCERITY and COU-  
 “RAGE.” *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxiii. This is the same author who blames the Christian Fathers for refusing to join in the Pagan rites! In another place he  
 . . . . . speaks

speaks of the Pagan senators, who *reluctantly* renounced the worship of Jupiter, in the presence of Theodosius, as eager to throw aside "the mark of *odious dissimulation*." ch. xxviii.

I would recommend to any young person who should be prejudiced against the primitive Fathers, and primitive Christianity, by *Mr. Gibbon's Strictures*, not to form their judgment from his *chosen* authority, Tertulian; but to read the short epistle of *Justin Martyr* to *Diognetus*, and his *Dialogue with Trypho*; the former of which is a beautiful summary of Christianity, and the latter abounds in Christian charity. Let him read besides *Athenagoras's Apology*; and as to the general conduct of the primitive Christians under persecution, and otherwise, he will find a much more just account in *Mr. Bryant's elegant and concise Treatise on the Authenticity of the Scriptures*, 2d edit. 1793.

I am sorry to have still to add to this long note: but *Mr. Gibbon's* views and representations of Pagan toleration also require some counterpoise, and therefore I cannot forbear to add the following admirable remark of *Dr. Leland*, to be found in the introduction to his excellent *Answer to Tindal*. "I cannot well reconcile  
"the extravagant accounts of that liberty, which flourished among the Pagans, with the excuse he makes  
"for the philosophers;" (the excuse is common with other writers, and, though a disgraceful one, is the *only* excuse that can be made for them;) "that if they  
"seemed to countenance the superstitions of their country, it was 'because it was not safe to talk otherwise;'  
"and that they were obliged to use 'softening expressions,' and that therefore they 'writ under great disadvantages.'" On this subject of Pagan toleration, which has been so continually misrepresented, the reader may further consult *M. Pauw's Recherches Philosophiques sur les Grecs*; the *Abbé Nonnette's Erreurs de Voltaire*, vol. i. *Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses*, b. ii. §§. 5. 6. *Kett's Third Bampton Lecture*, and the references there; and *Fuller on Deism*, Part I. ch. 5.

Page 362. note (3).

It is far from my intention, and from the design of this work, to discuss the several subjects of controversy alluded



alluded to in the Discourse. The subject of this Sermon is *Criticism in general*; its use and abuse; with reference, however, particularly to the present times, and the *Age of Reason*, the chief topic of these Lectures. It cannot, I think, be questioned but that the two doctrines of *Atonement* and the *Trinity* are those concerning which Biblical Criticism has been lately most occupied, and possibly always will be so. The first and leading objections to the received notions of atonement and the Trinity, have nothing indeed to do with Criticism. They are principally metaphysical; *a priori* arguments on the part of Reason, as to what God can or cannot do, or be expected to do; what *must* be his precise mode of existence, &c.—which are such mere impertinencies, where the question really relates to facts, that they are not worth considering. I must confess, I never can with any patient hope of improvement entertain such questions as, whether God could require a sacrifice? or whether he could not have forgiven us without a sacrifice? whether his Unity may be, in the possibility of things, consistent with a Trinity? &c. &c. Those who regard the Bible as a revelation from God, have only to search and enquire whether such doctrines are to be found *there*. And in such a case, nothing but Criticism, sound and honest Criticism, can serve to sober the intemperance of human Reason, to correct the mistakes of ignorance, and to point out the misrepresentations of prejudice or incapacity.

That it will in all cases be effectual, or that it ever will be even in one instance effectual, to the conversion of a *Deist* or *Socinian*, I do not pretend to say: not that I mean to charge any with so perverse an obstinacy, as to be blind to all truth; but because the object of the former being to deny the use, and necessity, perhaps even the possibility, of a divine revelation, every argument drawn from the *sacred* books may for ever continue questionable; and the object of the latter being *confessedly* to explain away the *literal* meaning of the text, no bounds can be set to the interpretations which fancy may suggest, or prejudice invent. But as long as Revelation is questioned, and the literal meaning of the Scriptures disputed, Criticism must be of the

utmost use, to open the eyes of those who are in danger of being misled. If these questions were entirely confined to the learned, I hope I should never be found deficient in respect for any man's talents and attainments, or an enemy to any investigations honestly pursued, and decently conducted, let the conclusions they led to be what they might. But when those who cry out most loudly for the unlimited exercise of Reason, will allow no man to have any reason but themselves, or those who think as they do; (for the title of *rational* Christians surely implies this, which Dr. Priestley, Mr. Belsham, and Mr. Lindsey, insist upon as being synonymous with Unitarian; "rational, *that is*, "Unitarian Christians," are Dr. Priestley's own words; and Mr. Belsham and Mr. Lindsey have the same; see Magee, and an excellent note in *Fuller's Calvinistic and Socinian Systems compared*, p. 42;) when, under pretence of learning, and great reading, and an *uncommon* application of "time, labour, patience and *candour*," the *common people* are given to understand, that the Bible does not contain doctrines, which the regular ministry of the Church have been careful to instruct them in; when the strongest assertions are advanced which admit of being proved to be in direct opposition to the truth, it is impossible to overlook such extravagant assumptions, and mischievous attempts.

It is not against the *truly learned* or *truly conscientious* Deist or Socinian, then, that any strictures I have to advance are intended. I wish every *such* opponent of the Trinity, or of the doctrine of atonement, or even of Revelation, to make the utmost use of his critical skill and knowledge. If the whole depends on the testimony of antiquity, the true meaning of certain Hebrew and Greek phrases, and the true interpretations of the customs of past times, let every authority be carefully consulted and examined: but let us not be told, *without examination*, that things are so, or not so: let not the mass of the people be deceived into a notion, which we think a vain one, namely, that the literal terms of the Bible are only calculated to mislead them, and that the doctrines of the Trinity and atonement, are the mere fabrication of incompetent Criticism, or bold Imposture.

It is too common with the unlearned to fancy Criticism unfriendly to the cause of truth. They do not like to be told, that their salvation is to depend on the construction of a Hebrew or Greek term, the substitution of a *Capb* for a *Béth*, or a *Jod* for a *Vau*: (see Note 2 :) and God forbid it should, in regard to themselves. But if it is of consequence to them to know the *terms* of salvation, (and if it is not, Revelation itself is of no use,) then it is fit they should know that it is only from *bad* Critics they are in danger; sound Criticism is their only security, and the truly learned their only friends. A few instances, perhaps, will serve to illustrate this; and if I select them chiefly from the writings of Dr. Priestley and his associates, it will be partly on account of their notoriety, and partly because, though the Doctor particularly has treated these subjects with all the parade of learning in some editions of his works, where they are open to Criticism, and have accordingly been amply criticised; yet his opinions have been also vended and circulated, by himself and other editors, in a different shape; stripped of the criticisms, and references, and citations; and in plain English: in which publications, (and I have one lying before me, dated three years *after* the valuable edition of Bishop Horsley's charges and correspondence,) disputed assertions are *repeated* without proofs, and yet, as fully proved; as unanswerable, though answered and refuted long before; as correct, though known to have been themselves corrected, by such an application of Criticism as cannot be disputed.

It might well surprise an unlearned Christian of the Church of England to be told, as Dr. Priestley tells us, that “from a full review of the religions of all ancient and modern nations, they appear to have been utterly destitute of any thing like a doctrine of proper atonement.” Any sound Critic being an honest man would certainly never have said this: but I do not mean to say that Dr. Priestley was not honest in making such an assertion; for he challenges us to find, “in the range of the whole *Jewish* and *Heathen* world, a single fact in contradiction.” This is at least fair, and it is well for the truth, that Critics have not been wanting to make such an enquiry. I will venture to

say, that the learned Professor Magee alone (for a reference to his very learned Notes upon the subject, in his late publication on atonement, is surely sufficient) has proved this assertion to be as contrary to fact, as any thing could be. It is a fortunate circumstance therefore, that Criticism is still cultivated sufficiently to rescue the world from the ill effects of such confident, but ill founded assertions.—Again, as the opinions of the primitive Fathers of the Church will always be resorted to as authority of no small weight and respectability, when their testimony is adduced, it is highly important that their words should be correctly translated; and if terms which give a particular turn, if not the whole force, to a sentence, are overlooked or omitted, it is well to have Critics who are capable of restoring them to their proper places. That such accidents have befallen Dr. Priestley's references and translations, may be seen in *Bishop Horsley's Tracts*, Letter I. §. 7. Letter VI. §§. 12—23. Letter X. §. 4. And that other modern Unitarians are liable to such oversights may be seen also, I think, in the review of *Mr. Jones's Development of Facts*, *Brit. Crit.* vol. xviii. 630.

Any Trinitarian might well be startled to learn from Dr. Priestley, that “we find nothing like Divinity ascribed to Jesus Christ before Justin Martyr,” and that “all the early Fathers speak of Christ as not having existed always.”—And if there were no Critics capable of construing Greek better than Dr. Priestley; if there were not some capable of reading what he never read, or of reading what he had read with more attention and better judgment; had there never been such scholars as Bishop Bull, and Bishop Horsley, to examine into these matters, these very assertions might have passed for indisputable truths. But I must confess I think the contrary is as clearly proved, as Criticism can prove it; and this is a question merely of Criticism. How the Ante-Nicene Fathers expressed themselves we know; who is most capable of interpreting their expressions, is another question: but we may be sure, that when Dr. Priestley, in rendering the celebrated passage of Theophilus, which he conceives to be the first introduction of the term Trinity, tells us, Theophilus wrote, that the “fourth day was the type of  
“man,

“man, who needs light, that the word may be God, “and the Man wisdom,” Dr. Priestley was not capable of understanding his authority. Dr. Priestley certainly here makes the learned Bishop of Antioch talk nonsense *against* the Trinity, when he spoke as plainly as he could *in favour of it*, according to the language and manners of the times : Τετάρτη δὲ τύπος ἐστὶν Ἀνθρώπου ὁ προσδεῖς τῇ φωτὶ ἵνα ᾗ Θεὸς, Λόγος, Σοφία, Ἀνθρώπος. “The fourth day was the type of Man, who needeth “light, that there might be, God, the Word, or Logos, “the *Wisdom, Man.*” Which, as Bishop Horsley says, is so clear, that the sense could hardly be missed at first sight, by a school-boy in his second year of Greek: and indeed, considering what the context expresses, he is certainly right. See *Theoph. ad Autolyt.* lib. ii. p. 106. Oxon. 1684. See also the note there.

Dr. Priestley is dead and gone, and his Criticisms are at an end. As an able and indefatigable experimentalist, his name will live for ever; and from the character he bore among his friends, we are forbidden to suspect him of any intention to deceive. The foregoing instances therefore must be placed to the account either of his incapacity, or his carelessness in forming his opinions upon theological subjects, and in delivering them to the world. But the harm that Dr. Priestley did not design, his writings may still produce; and it is therefore, that I have thought it my duty to bear testimony to the equivocal character of his assertions, that they may not be received as truths by any means indisputable. I have chosen the three instances, adduced from the works of Bishop Horsley and Professor Magee, because it gives me an opportunity to refer to publications, which may supply many other instances to the same purpose, and which, in this particular line of Biblical Criticism, are *truly an honour to the age*. I am sorry to say, that my own collections from the works of Dr. Priestley might furnish many more; but I must contract what I have to say. Any person competent to read the able, and, in most cases, unanswerable arguments of the two great living Critics referred to, will lament to be told, that an edition of some of Dr. Priestley's writings is extant, evidently prepared for the perusal, and suited to the pockets, of the lower classes of

people: in which, as though no question had ever arisen upon the subject, the following is the account given of the death of Christ, as described in the Apostolic writings. "The death of Christ is *compared* to a " *Sacrifice* in general, BECAUSE he gave up his life in " the cause of virtue and of God; and more especially " a *sacrifice for sin*, BECAUSE his death and resurrection were necessary to the confirmation of the Gospel, by which sinners are brought to repentance, and " thereby reconciled to God. It is called a *curse*, BECAUSE he died in a state of suspension, which was " by the Jews appropriated to those persons who were " considered as reprobated by God. And it is called a " *Passover*, BECAUSE it may be considered as a sign of " our deliverance from the power of sin, as the passover " among the Jews was a sign of their deliverance " from the Egyptian bondage. It is also called a *Ransom*, BECAUSE we are delivered *by the Gospel* from " sin and misery. On the same account, he is said by " his death to *bear or take away our sins*; since his " *Gospel* delivers us from the power of sin, and consequently from the punishment of it."

If this was only the opinion of a plain unlettered Englishman, it might pass for one interpretation among others; and it would deserve our indulgence, as a mere conjecture, which every man thinks, and may feel indeed in this country, that he has leave to form. But when it is officiously set forth as the sentiments of a man who professed to be a Critic in Greek and Latin; (and indeed in Hebrew, for his Criticisms virtually extend as far;) who is known to have boasted of the pains he had taken "to read, or at least look *carefully* " through, many of the most capital works of the ancient Christian writers;" it is really lamentable, that people should be so misled. There is no Latin or Greek or Hebrew in the whole book; but then we are encouraged to do without them, by trusting to the use Dr. Priestley had made of them; for we are here told confidently, what has been denied by most eminent Critics for many centuries past, that Christ *could not* have been a sacrifice in the literal sense of the term; that he *could not* have been the antitype of the Jewish sacrifices, the paschal lamb, or scape-goat; that the

tenor

tenor of the Scripture language is, that God is essentially merciful and gracious, without *the least reference to any other being or agent whatsoever*, and disposed to forgive us freely and gratuitously, upon our repentance and amendment, without any *other atonement or satisfaction*; that sacrifices for sin under the law of Moses *were never considered as standing in the place of sinners*; that redemption means no more than deliverance in general; that to die *for us*, means only for our sakes; and that to *bear* the sins of mankind, is no more than to bear or take them away: upon which last observation, as it is accompanied with a critical *assertion*, I cannot forbear stopping to make some remarks.

“Beside the manifest injustice, and indeed absurdity,” says Dr. Priestley, “of an innocent person being punished for one that is guilty, the *word does not signify to bear or take upon another, but to bear away, or to remove by whatever means.*” There are two Hebrew words, (for of the Greek term, ἀναπέρω, used by St. Peter, I shall have to speak elsewhere,) out of which Dr. Priestley had his choice, נשא and סבל. Which of these he alludes to we cannot say; but they are both discussed, and their meaning amply scrutinised by Professor Magee, in the very learned and curious Notes to his Sermons already referred to. As this is the most modern Criticism upon these terms, it luckily includes all Dr. Priestley’s objections; which are in fact only Dr. Taylor’s and Mr. Dodson’s revived. Dr. Magee’s conclusion upon the subject is, that when joined with the word SIN, they are constantly used, throughout Scripture, either in the sense of *forgiving* it on the one hand; or of *sustaining*, either directly or in figure, the *penal consequences* of it on the other; and that they were undoubtedly so applied by Isaiah in the celebrated prophecy of our Saviour, who was to be “wounded for our transgressions,” and “smitten for our iniquities,” by whose “*chastisement*” our peace was to be effected, and by whose “*bruises*” we were to be healed. Such a positive assurance, that the original word does not signify to *bear, or take upon another*, could only be calculated to turn the attention of the unlearned reader aside from the doctrine of Christ’s

having been a real sacrifice and a proper atonement, by "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," 1 Pet. ii. 24; a passage the terms of which have also been disputed, but which the same learned Professor has likewise considered at length, and ably vindicated from the misrepresentations of Socinian Criticism. But the English reader who knows not a word of Hebrew, or Greek, or Latin, may, I think, be easily made to comprehend how much the truth is violated by any unqualified assertion, that to "*bear sins*," in Scripture language, does not admit of the sense of *bearing the sins of another*, as a weight, or burthen, or punishment; for both the original words, סבל and נשא, are so used in some passages of Scripture, as to admit of no other meaning; but particularly excluding the meaning Socinians would insist upon, that of "*bearing away*." The Deist and Infidel, who find such fault with the *second* Commandment, particularly Mr. Paine, will not suffer us, I fancy, to depart from this meaning, wherever in the Old Testament the *sons* are spoken of as *bearing the iniquities of their fathers*. If any, in defence of the denunciations they are so offended with, were to pretend that the sons were no otherwise to *bear* the iniquities of their fathers, than by removing them and bearing them away, I believe such Criticism would be thought no better than a quibbling evasion; and yet I think the Socinian could interpret those passages no otherwise with any consistency. The most striking passages, in which this expression occurs, are Lamentations v. 7. Ezekiel xviii. 19, 20. in the former of which the term סבל occurs, and in the latter נשא. The whole chapter of Ezekiel is sufficient to convince any ingenuous mind, that to *bear* must here mean not only to bear the iniquities of another, but to partake in the weight and punishment of them. As for the other unqualified assertion which the passage contains, that "there is a manifest injustice, and indeed absurdity, in supposing that an innocent person could be punished for one that is guilty;" I know not why, if good is to ensue, even in the eye of reason, an innocent person may not be permitted to suffer for the sins of another, as *justly* as to suffer for no guilt or crime of his own: which appears to have certainly been the case with our  
blessed



bleſſed Lord at all events, Socinians themſelves being judges. But at leaſt, St. Peter was blind to this *very* *manifeſt* injuſtice and abſurdity; for he even tells us, and ſurely with great propriety, “that it is *better*, if the will “of God be ſo, that we ſuffer for well-doing, than for “evil-doing;” 1 Peter iii. 17 : and how does he illuſtrate it? By the very caſe of our Saviour; “For “Chriſt,” ſaith he, “hath once *suffered* for *ſin*, the “*juſt* for the *unjuſt*, (that he might bring us to God;)” ver. 18. And in the preceding chapter how does he encourage ſervants to the patient endurance of *unjuſt* ſufferings? “For this is thank-worthy, if a man, for “conſcience toward God, endure grief, *suffering* “*wrongfully*. For what glory is it, if when ye be “buffeted for *your faults*, ye ſhall take it patiently? “But if when ye do well, and ſuffer for it, ye take it “patiently, this is acceptable to God; for even here- “unto were ye called; becauſe Chriſt alſo *suffered* for “us, leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his “ſteps: who *did no ſin*, neither was guile found in his “mouth.” Ch. ii. 19—22. I know we ſhall be ſent back to our Lexicons, and Bibles, to diſcover the true ſenſe of ſuffering FOR another, which is ſaid not to imply any ſubſtitution of one for another. Profeſſor Magee has conſidered this difficulty alſo in the 30th Note to his 1ſt Sermon; to which I muſt refer the reader, my only object being to ſhew, that it is not allowable to ſay in ſo unqualified a manner, that there is a manifeſt injuſtice and abſurdity in the notion of one perſon ſuffering for the guilt of another; for according to *our* notions, I ſee not, but that it might appear to be always unjuſt that the innocent ſhould ſuffer at all, and an abſurdity that they ſhould be made to ſuffer, or even be permitted to ſuffer, for *the ſake* of, and *for the benefit* of, the *ſinful* and *guilty*; which is the only amendment the Socinians offer us. The Racovian Catechiſm aſſerts, that Chriſt died, as *Victima ſuccedanea*; “and I think, (ſays the Examiner of Mr. Leſlie’s laſt Dialogue on the Socinian Controverſy,) “he that “ſuffers with a deſign to prevent our ſuffering (which “is granted) truly ſuffers *noſtro loco*, in our ſtead.”

Not long ago the world was much occupied in learning from Mr. Godwin what were the true principles

ples of Political Justice. Now one of the principles he lays down is to the following effect: "It is right that I should inflict suffering *in every case* where it can be clearly shewn, that such infliction will produce an overbalance of good: but this infliction bears no reference to the mere innocence or guilt of the person upon whom it is made. An *innocent* man is the *proper* subject of it, if it tend to good." *Pol. Just.* vol. ii. p. 322.

It will still, I know, be objected, as Episcopius of old objected, that it is a different thing to punish the innocent, and to punish one for the sins of another, of which he was not guilty. There is a difference, we acknowledge; but yet a Socinian has been found, who has granted, that the latter has been the case with the *Jews*; and not only so, but that all nations have learnt from experience "*quod gravia scelera etiam in liberis vindicentur.*" See *Wolxogenius* on Matth. xxvii. 25. "His blood be upon us, and *upon our children*;" cited by Edwards, in the second part of his *Preservative against Socinianism*, p. 52. Grotius also, in his celebrated Tract *De Satisfactione Christi*, c. 4. observes, "Ubi consensus aliquis antecederet, ferme ausim dicere omnium eorum quos Paganos diximus, neminem fuisse, qui alium ob alterius delictum puniri injustum duceret."

I have shewn, that in the case of Dr. Priestley there is good reason to be suspicious of his Criticisms, when he ventures to tell us why it is that our Saviour's sufferings are spoken of in terms applicable to the Jewish and heathen sacrifices. His "BECAUSES" are not always very correct, nor yet Mr. Lindsey's "VIDELICETS;" of which I shall next proceed to give an instance.

In his *Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship*, he is very severe upon Dr. Doddridge's mode of Criticism concerning the two natures of Christ, in his paraphrase on Mark xiii. 32. (*Family Expositor*, sect. clxii.) Dr. Doddridge's mode of Criticism arises from a difficulty, which is common to the Trinitarian and Socinian; namely, that in the New Testament many things are predicated of Christ, which cannot be otherwise reconciled, than either by the supposition, that he possessed two natures, or by explain-  
ing

ing away some of the plainest and simplest declarations of Christ himself. Dr. Doddridge proceeds upon the first plan; Mr. Lindsey adopts the latter. Dr. Doddridge's mode of Criticism has been adopted by many very able commentators, and very well *illustrated* by the learned Mr. Leslie, in his first Dialogue on the *Socinian Controversy*. See also *Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity*, vol. ii. 360; *Burnet on the Articles*; *Bishop Pretyman's Elements of Christian Theology*; and the *Vth Dialogue of Athanasius*, 183. edit. 1570.

That such a mode of interpretation is natural, supposing the doctrine of the Incarnation to be true, Mr. Lindsey might learn from a work, which cannot be suspected of any theological bias: and I shall cite it, because it may at least serve to shew, that Dr. Doddridge's method of interpretation is not a mere invention of *Christian* divines, subsequent to the days of Erasmus, as Mr. Lindsey would insinuate.

The Hindus, who, it is well known, regarded an *incarnation* of the Deity to be an event strictly possible, appear, from the Bhagvat-Geeta, to have exactly adopted the distinction Dr. Doddridge is censured for, and to have conceived it to be both natural and reasonable. Krēṣṇā, who is supposed to be the Deity Incarnate, after having disclosed his divine nature to Ārjōon, in the following terms, among others, "I am the Creator of all things, and all things proceed from me;" is thus addressed by Ārjōon: "Neither the Dēws nor the Dānōos are acquainted, O Lord, with thy appearance; thou alone, O First of *Men*, knowest thy own spirit." Upon which last words I find Mr. Wilkins's note to be, "Ārjōon makes use of this expression, as addressing the *Deity* in his *human* shape." And thus at the beginning of the *XIth Lecture*, Ārjōon is also represented as addressing the Incarnate Deity: "It is even as thou hast described thyself, O *mighty Lord*! I am now, O *most elevated of Men*, anxious to behold thy divine countenance; wherefore, if thou thinkest it may be beheld by me, shew me thy never-failing spirit."

My object in this reference is only to shew, that supposing an incarnation of the Deity possible, it is natural.

tural still to speak of the two natures as distinct, and to conceive, that the attributes of the Deity may, by the assumption of the human nature, be concealed from our view.

But to return to Mr. Lindsey. When Dr. Doddridge refers our Lord's ignorance of the day of judgment to his human nature, he supports his paraphrase by citing John iii. 13. to shew, that it could not have regard to the divine nature of Christ, in respect to which he must necessarily have been, as *his own words* intimate, both omnipresent and omniscient. "*No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven; even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.*" Dr. Doddridge's paraphrase has the consent and approbation of almost all other commentators, who acknowledge the Divinity of our blessed Saviour: and the passage just cited from St. John is upon all occasions held to express at once both the hypostatical union, and the common distinction of the two natures. "*Quod se filium hominis (id est hominem) in cœlo esse docet,*" is Beza's explanation, "*aperte duas naturas distinguit, et unam hypostasim confirmat.*" See his note upon the passage. But at all events, the pre-existence of our Saviour would seem to be established by it. Mr. Lindsey, however, denies this; and after blaming Dr. Doddridge for his "*quibbling arts,*" and the liberties he takes with the *express* words of our Saviour, he tells us, that it has been thought by some to be made out to *full satisfaction*, that the words in question hold forth *nothing of the kind* which is here inferred from them; but are thus to be understood:

*And no man hath ascended up to heaven.] VIDELICET,* No man knows the whole mind and will of God, for the salvation of mankind.

*But he that came down from heaven.] VIDELICET,* But I, who have my commission from God, who am his Prophet, his Messenger, and the Messiah.

*Who is in heaven.] VIDELICET,* Who am intimately acquainted with the counsels of God.

Mr. Lindsey subjoins, "Indolent and superficial inquirers among Christians, and unbelievers of like character, *may object* to such a construction of our Lord's words; that the *real meaning* should be so re-

"note

“mote from the *sound of the words*.” But is not this, by Mr. Lindsey’s own acknowledgment, to make *our Saviour* quibble? Is there any worse way of equivocating, than to have a *real meaning* remote from the *sound of the words* we utter? And yet it is in this way that the “rational Christians” expound every speech of our blessed Lord, which has been thought to infer his pre-existence and divinity, his omnipresence and omnipotence. It is thus also that they explain all that the Apostles have told us of the efficacy of the blood of Christ; and so remote do they make the *real meaning* of their expressions to be, from the *sound of the words* made use of, that though the Apostle to the Hebrews insists upon it, that the object of Christ’s appearance upon earth was to “put away sin by the *sacrifice of himself*,” and that accordingly “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;” yet we are taught to believe his passion was no sacrifice, his blood no atonement: we are confidently assured, that “Jesus Christ never professed himself to be a Being of any other nature than the human, and that his Apostles never believed or declared him to be more.” *Lindsey*, p. xi.

Trinitarians can never make a better defence for themselves than by affirming, that they cannot believe otherwise, consistently with their respect for the sincerity and integrity of our Lord and his Disciples. But Mr. Lindsey is highly offended with this mode of defence, and considers it as a base aspersion of the characters of Christ and his Apostles. Bishop Newton, from a full consideration of the many passages in the New Testament, which have been generally held to assign to Christ the attributes and distinctions of the Godhead, concludes with reason, that if such language is not to be considered as implying the proper divinity of Christ, our Saviour himself, and his holy Apostles, must lie under the imputation of being blasphemers and impostors; which is so shocking and incredible, that we have no alternative, but to believe that God was *actually* in Christ reconciling the world to himself; that is, that Christ was God. Is this to asperse the characters of Christ and his Apostles? Is it not to vindicate and defend the integrity of their words? Suppose the

the Bishop had rejected their evidence, and assigned as a reason, that he had discovered, that though the expressions were literally so intelligible, as that no one could mistake them; yet that it was so much the way of Christ and his Apostles to use words remote in sound from the *real* meaning they designed to express, that he would not believe them, though they told him the same thing over and over again:—I believe it would be generally admitted, that *this* would be indeed a gross aspersions of their characters. It is odd enough that Socinus is in the same scrape with the Bishop: he, it seems, judged, from the character given to our blessed Lord in the Gospels, that prayer and invocation were so evidently due to him, that he declared, if it was not so, “Christ and his Apostles must have been most remarkable impostors and falsifiers, and no credit can or ought to be given to any thing they say.” To do Socinus justice, it should be known, that he also carefully prefaces his remark with an assurance, that Christ and his Apostles had clearly taught the propriety and lawfulness of invoking Christ. “*Sic enim cum ab IP-  
so, tum ab Apostolis edocti sumus.*” And yet, what are Mr. Lindsey’s reflections upon this? “Such vehement asseverations, and such unworthy insinuations concerning our Lord and his Apostles, betray a mind too much heated with prejudice and self-opinion, to inquire with a proper temper after truth.” So much for Socinus singly: but when the Bishop comes to be joined with him, “I would be far from saying,” says Mr. Lindsey, “that Socinus or Bishop Newton were men void of true *piety*, as I believe they had a great deal; and it is a disposition of mind that is particularly discernible throughout all the writings of the *former*. But this may be said concerning them, from the licence which they both gave themselves in aspersing the characters of Christ and his Apostles, on the supposition, that their words were not agreeable to their interpretation of them; that they were men of strong passions, unreasonably attached to their own conclusions, and impatient of contradiction about them; and perhaps, (which is the best apology that can be made for them,) weakly imagined, that all  
“Reve-

“Revelation would fall to the ground, and come to nothing, if their particular systems concerning it were not to be embraced, and universally prevail.”

It is certainly a great blunder in Mr. Lindsey's Criticism, that he cannot discover, that to give strong credit to any doctrine, which we conceive to have been expressly taught by our Saviour and his Apostles, because they would otherwise seem to have been impostors and falsifiers, is to defend and do honour to the integrity of their characters. How Mr. Lindsey could argue himself into the contrary supposition we can only judge from his own words: “It is wholly unaccountable,” says he, “how men could bring themselves to use such terms as these concerning the blessed Jesus; that he must be thus undervalued and set at nought, as a gross impostor, a foul blasphemer, or downright madman, if he be not what some men take him to be, and do not come up to all that their warm imaginations have figured to them concerning him.” Indeed they do no such thing: they only say, his expressions so palpably convey to us the notion of his divinity, and his title to invocation, that we *must* believe both, because the blessed Jesus was in his whole life so pure, so holy, so correct, that we could believe any thing sooner than that he could impose on us, or blaspheme God, or indulge any frantic ideas of his own equality with him. This is the substance of both Bishop Newton's and Socinus's defence; and as it is the *best* reason to be assigned for our belief of the Trinity, it is well to vindicate it from such strange and inconsistent Criticism. Bishop Burnet adopts the same method of vindication of his belief of the divinity of Christ: “When all these things are laid together, in that variety of expressions, in which they lie scattered in the New Testament, it is not possible to retain any reverence for those books, if we imagine they are written in a style so full of approaches to the deifying of a mere man, that without a very critical studying of languages and phrases,” (and we might add, upon Mr. Lindsey's authority, and the custom of other rational Christians, a *substitution of some meaning very remote from the sound of the words used*,) “it is not possible to understand them otherwise. Idolatry

“latry and a plurality of Gods seem to be the main things that the Scriptures warn us against; and yet here is a pursued thread of passages and discourses, that do naturally lead a man to think that Christ is the true God; who yet, according to those who deny his divinity, only acted in his name, and has now a high honour conferred on him by God.”

Bishop Newton is also reproached by Mr. Lindsey for expressing his belief, that the Socinians and Unitarians were of that description of heretics, whom St. Peter alludes to, 2 Peter ii. 1. and whom he charges with the sin of denying the Lord that bought them: for the Socinians neither admit the divinity of Christ, nor acknowledge that he made atonement for our sins. But this, says Mr. Lindsey, is a mistake of the Bishop’s. “The Apostle speaks not of Christ, but of God; for it is not the usual language of Scripture concerning Christ, that *he* bought or redeemed us.” This is really very extraordinary Criticism. Who was “*the Lord that bought us,*” but “*the Son of man, who gave his life a ransom for us?*” Matth. xx. 28. Mark x. 45. The “*one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.*” 1 Tim. ii. 5. 6. But Mr. Lindsey says it was *God* who bought us. Well then; the *Son of man* in Matthew and Mark, and the *one Mediator* in Timothy, must have been God: and such is the real amount of Mr. Lindsey’s argument against Bishop Newton. No doubt, had the Bishop undertaken to prove the divinity of Christ from the above passages of the two Evangelists and St. Paul, Mr. Lindsey would not have failed to point out to us, that it was only “the *Son of Man,*” the *Man* Christ Jesus,” who paid the ransom. The fact is, it was paid by Christ Jesus, who was truly Man. Mr. Lindsey says, it was paid by God, and the Trinitarians maintain, that Jesus Christ was truly *God* also. Where then is the difference between us? Mr. Lindsey says it is the usual language of Scripture, that God *bought* and redeemed us: St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Paul assure us, that Christ Jesus, the Son of Man, paid the ransom: what must we infer? I do not mean to make Mr. Lindsey a Trinitarian against his own consent; I only mean to suggest, that the dilemma he has here brought himself into seems to be a strong



strong case for the application of his Biblical Criticism, by which the sound of the words used requires to be considered, and represented as very remote from the writer's real meaning; where nothing less than a forced *videlicet* can possibly extricate him.

Mr. Lindsey, p. 254, laments the consequences of Socinus's inveterate opinion concerning the propriety of invoking Christ, and censures the Racovian Catechisms for adopting the error. The compilers, he says, were mistaken, in alleging, that Christians are ever described in the New Testament as those that called upon the name of the Lord Jesus. All the passages that are so rendered should, says Mr. Lindsey, have been translated, "those that *were called by the name of Jesus.*" He instances Acts ix. 14. 21. and 1 Cor. i. 2. If Mr. Lindsey can find an authority for *determining* the signification of τὰς ἐπικαλούμενας τὸ ὄνομα to be passive in these places, his Criticism might be listened to: but at the very best, he could only depend on the verb being sometimes used actively, and sometimes passively: whereas we have against him the authority of many most eminent critics; we have the example of the LXX, who have uniformly ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου, to express the invocation of God; we have Mr. Lindsey's own acknowledgment, that in the case of Stephen it is used actively, and that he certainly died "calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus;" and we have the profane testimony of Pliny to the custom of invoking Christ among the primitive Christians, whom he describes as "addressing themselves in prayer to Christ quasi DEO." The great Mr. Locke has been charged with a wilful endeavour δαλεῦν ὑποθέσει, by the same sort of Criticism; and Mr. Lindsey can scarcely, I think, escape a similar imputation. See Wells's note on the last passage cited by Mr. Lindsey, 1 Cor. i. 2. It should be remarked, as the learned Dr. Wells observes, that the καὶ λέγοντα, Acts vii. 5. indisputably determines the signification of ἐπικαλέμενον to be "calling upon," in the case of Stephen. See Leigh and Parkhurst, and consult Bishop Horsley's XIIth Letter to Dr. Priestley.

Page 365. note (4).

I hope I shall not do M. Volney any injustice, in the remarks I have to offer upon the very extraordinary

suspicions he has expressed concerning the real existence of our blessed Saviour. Living altogether in the country, with no command of books, but such as my own small collection supplies, I am obliged sometimes to trust to translations, which may be faulty: and in this particular instance, I must acknowledge, I have only an English edition of his *Ruins* to consult; a spirited translation certainly, and therefore perhaps correct; but without a name, and of a very ordinary appearance. Nor have I any opportunity of examining some of the many authorities to which M. Volney refers. I shall meddle with no more, therefore, than what I can immediately reply to: and if I mistake M. Volney's arguments, through any error in the translation I use, I shall hope to be excused, when it is considered, that as it is my object to prevent the world from being misled by the abuse of Criticism, Criticism is never more abused, than when it is made the means of dazzling the eyes of the vulgar, by cheap editions and officious translations.

I have briefly stated in the Discourse the sum of M. Volney's arguments concerning the origin of Christianity; in proof of which he alleges, in his note, that there are absolutely no other monuments of the existence of Jesus Christ, as a human being, than a passage in Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.* lib. xviii. c. 3; (it should be c. 4;) a single phrase in Tacitus, *Annal.* lib. xv. c. 44; and the Gospels. The first, he says, is *unanimously* acknowledged to be apocryphal; and the second is so vague, and so *evidently taken from the deposition of the Christians before the tribunals*, that it may be ranked in the class of evangelical records. It remains to enquire, of what authority are *these* records? [i. e. the evangelical records, or Gospels.] "All the world knows," says *Faustus*, who, though a Manichean, was one of the most learned men of the *third* century—"All the world knows, that the Gospels were neither written by Jesus Christ, nor his Apostles; but by certain unknown persons, who rightly judging, that they should not obtain belief respecting things which they had not seen, placed at the head of their recitals the names of cotemporary Apostles." For this piece of evidence M. Volney cites *Beaufobre*, vol. i. and *Bu-*  
*rigni's*

*rigni's Hist. des Apologiftes de la Religion Chrétienne.* The latter he calls a sagacious writer, who has *demonstrated* the absolute uncertainty of those foundations of the Christian religion. And thus he concludes, as I have stated in my Discourse, that "the existence of Jesus is no better proved, than that of Osiris and Hercules, Fôt or Bedou;" "with whom," says M. de Guignes, "the Chinese continually confound him, for they never call Jesus by any other name than Fôt." *Hist. des Huns.* As to this last circumstance mentioned by M. de Guignes, which M. Volney seems to depend on a good deal; I must just stop to observe, that the name and religion of Fôt, or Foë, in China, is said, according to that respectable Orientalist *Renaudot*, to have been introduced into China by an embassy, which had been sent from thence to discover the *Prophet of the West*, whom Confucius had seen in vision, and foretold. But, instead of prosecuting their journey westward *beyond India*, they conceived Fôt to be the Prophet they were in search of, and so returned, introducing his name and worship, idolatry, and the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, *instead of Christianity*, which they might have imported; for this event is said to have taken place thirty-five years after the death of our Saviour. See *Renaudot's* edition of two Arabic accounts of China, written in the ninth century; and *Complet's Chronological Abridgment*.

Now if, according to M. Volney's method of Criticism, a vulgar error of the Chinese is to be brought forward as a proof against the fact of Christ's real existence, the tradition just referred to is, I think, fully entitled to as much credit. How much more credit it is entitled to, I do not pretend to say; but why it may not serve to account for the misnomer alluded to, I see no reason whatever: and the work I take it from, *though not the story*, is referred to by M. Volney himself. To proceed to M. Volney's *only* evidences, or monuments of the existence of Jesus Christ. The celebrated passage in Josephus has *never been unanimously* pronounced to be apocryphal; but this is a trifle: it has certainly been suspected, and too much so to be brought forward as any decisive proof one way or the other;

other ; though we have lately seen its *authenticity* insisted upon, by a critic as visionary, I think, as M. Volney. See *Jones's Development of Facts, and Analysis of the Epistle to the Romans*. But if the passage is apocryphal, if Josephus has supplied us with no decisive account of the life and ministry of our Lord, I think it has been proved, that, so far from his silence being any demonstration of Christ's *non-existence*, it is a particular proof that he did exist; for the *report* of his existence, of his miracles, &c. must have been prevalent when Josephus wrote ; and there is much reason to think, had such reports not been true, he *must* have had many motives to prove them to have been false. See *Bishop Berkeley's Minute Philosopher*, Dial. vi. 295, 296. *Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity*, vol. i. 311, 312. and *Professor Bullet's Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*; where this is admirably shewn. But M. Volney does not seem to have known; that in two other passages Josephus speaks first of James the brother of Christ; τὸν ἀδελφὸν τῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ λεγομένῳ Χριστῷ, and of John the Baptist; both pretty strong acknowledgments of his human existence.—Let us proceed to Tacitus.

Tacitus by no means himself refers us to the depositions of the Christians: what he particularly affirms of Christ might just as probably, if not more probably, be derived from the public records of Rome, and perhaps from the representations of Pontius Pilate himself. His words are, not that the Christians only asserted this of Christ, but as a well known matter of fact ; “Auctor  
“ nominis ejus, Christus ; (qui) Tiberio imperante, per  
“ procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus e-  
“ rat.” The account he gives at the same time of the character of the Christians could never be derived from their own depositions; and what is more, so far from saying he learnt their name only from themselves, he expressly says, the vulgar, that is, the common people of Rome, called them Christians. “ Quos—*vulgus*  
“ Christianos appellabat.” And then follows the reason of this appellation ; which, as he was writing for posterity, and regarded Christianity only as a vain and pernicious superstition, (*exitiabilis superstitio*,) which would soon come to an end, was both proper and necessary.

cessary. But the allusion to Christ is such as, I think, to leave no possible doubt of Tacitus's own belief of the fact of his human existence.

As to the testimony of the Gospels, if we had no other means of tracing their authenticity and their real character as historical records, I must confess I should be strongly inclined to question the opinion of that *Faustus the Manichean* of the third century, whom M. Volney has singled out; especially when he tells us, all the world knew they were spurious. It is true, he cites *Beaufobre* and *M. Burigni*. I wish I had their works to examine, because I much question if Beaufobre could mention this opinion of Faustus, without some notice of its extravagance: at all events I should expect to find such a mark put upon it by M. Burigni, if he really is so *sagacious* a writer as M. Volney pretends. But I have not their works by me, and I must say I do really not think it worth while to go much out of my way, either to verify or refute any criticism of M. Volney's. But M. Volney totally suppresses the evidence of the primitive Fathers. Why so? Does he include them among Faustus's "whole world," who knew the Gospels to be spurious? *Tacitus*, it seems, was *no less, probably*, than an *Evangelist*; and yet the primitive Fathers, who had all been either Jews or Pagans, are not noticed, except indeed in one instance to give their testimony rather against Christ. Now it should be remembered, that their evidence has generally been accounted particularly valid, because they were not originally Evangelists, but converts. They themselves claim to be trusted, in making proselytes, as having been manifestly themselves overcome by the weight of evidence: "De vestris primus," says Tertullian; "fiunt non nascuntur Christiani." And Justin Martyr with great animation, in his Cohortation to the Greeks, exclaims, "Ἐλθετε, παιδεύθητε· γενέσθε ὡς ἐγὼ· ὅτι καὶ γὰρ ἡμῶν ὡς ὑμεῖς.. But if their *declarations* concerning Christ and his religion are to be suspected, surely their *appeals* are not. No writer, much less an apologist, would appeal to records in the hands of their enemies, if no such records ever existed: but Tertullian and Justin Martyr make such appeals; see the former, *advēr. Marcion*. lib. iv. c. 7. 36. et *advēr. Jud.* c. 9. *Apolog.* c. 21. and *Justin.* 1 *Apolog.* ad

*Antonin. Pium*, p. 59. edit. Sylburg. 1593. They make such appeals to prove the *birth*, *death*, and resurrection of Christ; they appeal to the public records of Rome; to the reports of Pontius Pilate; records, which St. Chrysostom tells us were in being when he wrote, 400 years after the birth of Christ; *In Christi Natal.* tom. v. edit. Sav. The censual Tables at Rome bore evidence not only to his birth, but that he was, as the Prophets foretold he should be, (*κατὰ σαρὰν*,) of the lineage of David, and that he was born at Bethlehem. Julian, who had the Roman archives in his keeping, and in his power, neither questioned the truth of our Saviour's life and miracles, nor refuted what Tertullian and Justin had asserted of them. To which we may add, that Justin Martyr had to do with Crescens, the Cynic philosopher, whom he challenged to dispute the cause of Christianity with him, before the senate of Rome. We cannot well doubt, therefore, but he would be correct in his appeals, and confident in such challenge. See *Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christianity*, and *Addison's Evidences of the Christian Religion*.

M. Volney's object, in thus endeavouring to set aside the human existence of Jesus Christ, is, as I have stated in the Sermon, in order to be able to persuade us, that he was no other than the Indian Vichenou, and that the Hindu and Christian Trinities are identical, and equally fabulous. His account is really so extraordinary, that I cannot give it in any words but his own: it begins as far back as the fall of man, which he confidently assures us is only an astronomical legend. "All  
 " the pretended personages mentioned in the Penta-  
 " teuch, from Adam to Abraham, or his father Terah,  
 " are, it seems, mythological beings; stars, constella-  
 " tions, countries. Adam is *Bootes*; Noah is *Osiris*;  
 " *Xithbutrus*, Janus, Saturn; that is to say, Capricorn,  
 " or the celestial genius that opened the year. Ac-  
 " cordingly, when we read, that in the beginning a  
 " man and a woman had by their fall brought sin and  
 " evil into the world, we are to understand the celestial  
 " virgin, or constellation *Virgo*, and the herdsman *Boo-*  
 " *tes*, who setting heliacally at the autumnal equinox,  
 " resigned the heavens to the wintry constellations,  
 " and seemed, in sinking below the horizon, to intro-  
 " duce

“duce into the world the genius of evil, *Abrimanes*,  
 “represented by the constellation of the *Serpent*. By  
 “the woman seducing the man, we have a lively  
 “image of the Virgin setting before Bootes, and ap-  
 “pearing to draw him after her,” &c. &c. Nothing  
 but M. Volney’s great celebrity could have induced  
 me to copy so far; I must contract the remainder as  
 well as I can. “The fruit, by which man was seduced,  
 “is the bunch of fruit, (in fact the ear of corn,) which  
 “the Virgin holds in her hand. The cherub placed  
 “at the entrance of the garden of Eden is the rising  
 “of Perseus, sword in hand, on the opposite side of the  
 “heavens, as the Virgin and Bootes set. The offspring  
 “of woman, foretold to crush the serpent’s head, &c.  
 “is the SUN, which, at the period of the summer sol-  
 “stice, at the precise moment that the Persian Magi  
 “drew the horoscope of the new year, found itself in  
 “the bosom of the Virgin; and which, on this ac-  
 “count, was represented in their astrological pictures  
 “in the form of an infant suckled by a chaste virgin;  
 “and afterwards became, at the vernal equinox, the  
 “Ram, or *Lamb*, conqueror of the constellation of the  
 “Serpent, which disappeared from the heavens.” We  
 have now proceeded far enough to be able to compre-  
 hend, if it is really comprehensible, the curious *etymo-*  
*logical* proof M. Volney advances of our *Saviour’s* hav-  
 ing been no other than a fanciful symbol of the *Sun*;  
 which it seems, among the many astrological and mys-  
 terious names bestowed on it, was called sometimes  
*Chris*, or Conservator; and hence the Hindu God *Chris-*  
*en*, or *Christna*; and the Christian *Christos*, the Son of  
 Mary. For, says he, the Greeks used to express by *X*,  
 or Spanish *iota*, the aspirated *ba* of the Orientals, who  
 said *baris*, in Hebrew *beres*, signifies the Sun; but in  
 Arabic the meaning of the radical word is, to guard,  
 to preserve; and of *baris*, guardian and preserver. It  
 is the proper epithet of Vichenou, which *demonstrates*  
 at once the identity of the Indian and Christian Trini-  
 ties, and their common origin. It is manifestly but one  
 system; its principal trunk is the Pythagorean system  
 of the soul of the world, or *Iou-Piter*. The epithet *Piter*,  
 or Father, having been applied to the Demiourgos of  
 Plato, gave rise to an ambiguity, which caused an en-

quiry to be made respecting the son of this father: in the opinions of the philosophers the son was understanding, *Nous* or *Logos*, from which the Latins had their *Verbum*.—We may observe farther, he concludes, that if *Cbris* comes from Harisch with a Schin, it will signify *artificer*, an epithet belonging to the Sun. These variations, which must have embarrassed the ancients, prove it to be the type of Jesus, as has been already remarked, in the time of Tertullian: “Many,” says this writer, “suppose, with greater probability, that the Sun is our God, and they refer us to the religion of the Persians.” *Apologet.* c. xvi.

I have already stated in the Sermon, that Tertullian mentions not a word of Christos being a type of the Sun. He certainly does state two causes for the error he alludes to, which, it must be confessed, were plausible enough; namely, that they prayed to the East, “denique inde suspicio, quod innotuerit nos ad orientem precari;” and that the Sunday was a festival with them, but which he expressly denies to have been at all connected with the worship of the Sun. “Æque si Diem Solis lætitiæ indulgemus, alia longe ratione quam religione Solis, &c.” For an account of the custom of praying to the East, see *Bingham’s Antiquities*, b. xiii. c. 8. That no idolatry was intended by it we may be sure; see the answer particularly directed to be given to *Heathens* by the author of the Questions to Antiochus, under the name of Athanasius, *Quæst.* 37.—One of the greatest abominations which the Prophet Ezekiel is represented to have seen, when he was carried in a vision to Jerusalem, was the apostasy of certain of the Jews, who turning their backs towards the Temple of God, directed their faces to the East, and worshipped the Sun; see Ezekiel viii. 16. and *Prideaux* on the passage in the ivth book of the 1st Part of his *Connection*. This may appear to be a proper reason for the answer above directed to be given to the Heathen, if not for the ceremony itself: for as the answer seems to imply that there was an obvious necessity for giving glory to God as the Creator, and true Light of the world, in opposition to those who worshipped the created light of the Sun; so the Prophet Malachi’s appellation of the *Sun of Righteousness* would seem to be expressly opposed to the visible



ble fountain of light. Justin Martyr (*Dial. cum Tryphone*, p. 274. edit. Sylburg) particularly draws a comparison between the believers in Christ, and the idolatrous worshippers of the Sun. Formerly, says he, God suffered men to worship the Sun; but nobody at any time was known to suffer death sooner than renounce their faith in the Sun: but for the name of Jesus some of all nations have been found to sustain all kinds of sufferings and punishments, sooner than be brought to deny him. Therefore is it that David says, Τὸ ὄνομα ΑΤΤΟΥ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιον ἀνατελεῖ. Pf. lxxii. 17. *Vulg.* "Sit nomen ejus benedictum in secula. *Ante* "Solem permanet nomen ejus;" which agrees with the LXX. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his vith Catechetical Discourse, speaks of some who took, not Christ for the Sun, as M. Volney would do, but the Sun for the Christ; τὸν δὲ Χριστὸν τὸν ἥλιον τοῦτον καλεῖσιν. But these were of those who acknowledged two principles, and therefore Cyril shews their inconsistency in allowing the Christ to be the son of the good principle, and yet confounding him with the Sun, a part of this world, which, according to them, proceeded from the bad principle. In his xith Lecture he alludes again to the same heresy, φημύσθωσαν οἱ λέγοντες τὸν ἥλιον εἶναι τὸν Χριστόν· ἡλίου γὰρ ἐστὶ δημοῦργος, οὐχ ὁ ἥλιος φαινόμενος. I wonder M. Volney, in the disposition he was in to prove our Saviour to have been no more than the Sun, should fix upon an etymological quibble, which totally betrays his cause, when he might certainly have deduced a more plausible argument from the circumstances just alluded to; which I have brought forward merely to shew, that his suspicions appear to be, in some respects, no new ones, but that the primitive Fathers were amply prepared to combat them.

That the Orientalists should, at the first introduction of Christianity among them, mistake the origin and meaning of the term Χριστός, as it is evident the Romans did, (see *Lactantius*, lib. iv. 7.) is not to be wondered: and perhaps this may have led to the interpolation of the celebrated poem of the Bhâgvat, and the more easy introduction of some parts of the spurious Gospels, as Sir William Jones suspected: see his *Paper on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India*, in the 1st vol. of the

the

the *Asiatic Researches* : where, by the bye, he censures the *Missionaries* for having given the Hindus ground to think that their Trinity was the same as the Christian, and ably points out the essential difference both of the Hindu and of the Platonic Trinities. That such interpolations might be possible, we may now the more readily conclude, from the discovery that Lord Teignmouth has given us intimation of, in the Preface to his Life of Sir William Jones ; namely, that the celebrated and very curious story of Satyavrata (in all respects so conformable to the true history of Noah) had been interpolated into the Purana, which fell into the hands of Mr. Wilford : an interpolation so ingeniously managed, as to escape the detection as well of Sir William Jones, as of Mr. Wilford himself.

But whatever mistakes may have happened in time past, in regard to the derivation and true meaning of the term *Χριστός*, M. Volney can never be excused as a modern Critic, for the manner in which he has endeavoured to account for the name. As he pretends to be conversant in the writings of Tertullian, he ought not to appear to be ignorant, as he does in this instance, of the true and orthodox meaning of the term : for in his treatise against Praxeas, speaking of the very term, he says, “ si tamen nomen est *Christus*, et non appellatio “ potius ; *unctus* enim significatur ;” in which he was extremely right. Christ is not a name, but a title ; “ *Christus* non proprium nomen est,” says Lactantius, “ sed nuncupatio potestatis, et regni :” a passage M. Volney would do well to examine, because it begins with noticing the *name* as well as the title of our blessed Lord ; “ *Jesus* quippe inter *homines* nominatur ;” see his *Institut.* lib. iv. c. 7. It is true, M. Volney does not quite pass over the name of Jesus, any more than the title of *Χριστός* ; for he remarks that *Christos*, the son of Mary, was at other times called *Yês* by the union of three letters, which, according to their numerical value, form the number of 608, one of the *solar* periods. “ And behold, O Europeans,” says the Orator, “ the “ name which with a Latin termination has become “ your *Yes-us*, or *Jesus* ; the ancient cabalistical name “ given to young Bacehus, the clandestine son of the “ virgin Minerva, who in the whole history of his life,

“ and

“and even in his death, calls to mind the God of the Christians; that is, the Star of the day, of which they are both of them emblems.” It is odd enough, that when M. Volney was so busy to find in the term *Χριστός* a *Conservator*, or preserving power, that is, the Indian Vichenou, he should not have made use of this name of Jesus, for this literally is *Conservator*, upon the most classical authority: it being the very word chosen by Tacitus for rendering the Greek term *Σωτήρ*, which every scholar knows to be the exact equivalent of the Hebrew *יְהוֹשֻׁעַ*. But M. Volney was aware probably that this would have overfet his argument; for, as Lactantius observes, “Jesus inter homines nominatur,” this name would have been rather too strong a proof of his human existence; including both his human nature and his saving power, according to Justin Martyr, who expressly observes, “*Ἰησὺς, καὶ Ἀνθρώπου, καὶ Σωτήρος, ὄνομα καὶ σημασίαν ἔχει.*” *Apol.* i. Besides, had he fixed upon Jesus, *Conservator*, to prove the identity of the Christian Logos and the Indian Vichenou, he must have allowed that there had been many *Vichenou's* among the Jews, for this name of Jesus was in common use.

But at last, to be serious, as the subject demands. Though M. Volney might hold the Gospels in contempt, it is no reason why *we* should: and at all events, when he chose to criticise the Bible term of *Χριστός*, he should at least have allowed the Bible to explain it in its own way. Now it happens that twice in the Bible it is mentioned together with its own orthodox interpretation: in the first the disciple Andrew informs Simon, “*Εὐρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν, ὃ ἔστι μετερμηνευόμενον ὁ Χριστός.*” “We have found the Messias, *which* is, being interpreted, “the *Christ*.” John i. 42. In the second, the woman of Samaria tells our Lord himself, “*Οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται, ὃ λεγόμενος Χριστός.*” I know that Messias cometh, “who is called (*otherwise, or by interpretation in the Greek tongue*; Wells) *Christ*.” John iv. 25. Now M. Volney had no right to pass over this interpretation. If it is not ignorance, it is stratagem, to pretend that the term *Christos* had any other derivation than is here assigned to it: and as the Hebrew *מָשִׁיחַ* does not answer to one of M. Volney’s absurd conceits, and the Greek *Χριστός* is a literal translation, (*Χριστός γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆ κεχρίσθαι*,

πεχρίσθαι, as Justin says, and as משיח from the root משה, we can only regard M. Volney's attempt to set aside our Saviour's human existence by the means of Criticism, as a great abuse of time and of talents, and a shocking attempt to mislead the unlearned, who always deserve to be protected from such mischievous designs. And the wish to do this may, I hope, be admitted as an excuse for my having dwelt so long on a subject, not otherwise deserving of it, and in regard to which the learned could not want any help.

I cannot however quite dismiss M. Volney without one or two more remarks. In a note, p. 135, the reader is desired to observe in general, that in the pictures drawn of the several religions of the earth, the writer has endeavoured to give as accurately as possible the letter and spirit of the opinions of each party. But I must maintain, that, in regard both to Judaism and Christianity, he has not kept even to the letter, much less to the spirit, of the sacred books: of which I need select no other instance than the very first paraphrase he gives us. "In the beginning," says he, "God (after having passed an eternity without doing any thing) conceived at length the design (without apparent motive) of forming the world out of nothing: that having in six days created the whole universe, he found himself tired on the seventh.—" We cannot wonder after this to find all the vulgar notions revived, of the whole world being damned for eating an apple, of the tyranny of God, &c. &c. Indeed M. Volney is in no instance more *accurate* than Mr. Paine, in his representations of true and genuine Christianity. M. Volney acknowledges, that from a view of all the different systems of religion, notwithstanding their dissimilitude in some points, their *resemblance* in others was not less striking; each claiming the first deposit and the original discovery. Does not this imply that there was a first deposit? and if so, which is likely to be that first system, the most corrupt, or the most pure? M. Volney thinks the most corrupt. But in M. Volney's view of the progress of natural religion, he reduces it to the following heads:

I. Origin of the idea of God: worship of the *elements*, and the physical powers of Nature.

II. Worship

II. Worship of the *stars*, or Sabeism.

III. Worship of *symbols*, or *Idolatry*.

IV. Worship of *two principles*, or Dualism.

V. Mystical or moral worship, or the systems of a future state.

VI. The animated world, or worship of the *Universe* under different emblems.

VII. Worship of *fire*, (the *solar fire* principally,) as the soul or vital principle of the Universe.

VIII. The world a machine. Worship of the *Dem-iourgos*, or supreme Artificer.

M. Volney refers the whole to Egypt, and pretends that Moses drew from thence; and though he admits, that he meant to form a separate religion, to the exclusion of symbols, yet he finds in his God Jehovah, יהוה, or, as it is written in the translation I use, Yahouh, *the soul of the world*, and its symbols in the fiery bush. Nay, he finds the very name of Osiris in the song of Moses, Deut. xxxii. to which very chapter of the Bible I should willingly refer the reader in proof of Moses's *correct* ideas of the God of heaven. But what can we say about Osiris? "These," says M. Volney, "are the literal expressions of the book of Deuteronomy, ch. xxxii. The works of *Tfour* are perfect. Now *Tfour* has been translated by the word *Creator*: its proper signification is to give forms, and this is one of the definitions of Osiris in Plutarch." Its proper signification is, I believe, so far to give forms, that as it signifies a *rock*, and is as such, in the song alluded to, made an emblem of the *stability*, *might*, and *powerful protection* of God; so, as a piece of a rock or sharp stone was often used as a knife, it might in that sense give forms: but I verily see no other connection that can be traced, and am sure that the word, as applied in Deuteronomy, has only the sense assigned to it above. See Parkhurst under צר. M. Volney has much more on the term *Yaboub*, but it is really too trifling to regard. I shall conclude with referring to the Hebrew Scriptures in general, for a proof how carefully and particularly the several errors of natural religion, stated and enumerated by M. Volney, were excluded by the religion of the Jews; as the worship of the *elements*, *stars*, *symbols*, *idols*, the *two principles*, and the *solar fire*. I need

need not point out the passages; it requires but little pains to discover them.

*Page 375. note (5).*

*All of whom are claimed at least by the Unitarians of the present day, as the friends of their party.]* That is, they would make them out to be such, if they could; for though the differences subsisting seem to be invincible, yet their general agreement in detracting from the full divinity of our Saviour, constantly entitles them to a manifest preference, when their opinions are compared with those Trinitarians who are commonly styled *Athanasians*. This may be plainly seen in *Mr. Lindsey's Historical View of the Unitarian Doctrine*; from which I have taken many of the names mentioned in the Discourse. And though it is very unpleasant to have to notice personalities, yet Mr. Lindsey indulges in them with such freedom, and with such professions of impartiality, that they certainly deserve to be noticed. He pretends to lay it down as a canon of Criticism, that "we have no grounds or pretensions whatsoever to assert, that the religious persuasions of others, whatever they be, are espoused by them upon bad and interested views, and not owing to sincere conviction," p. 143: and yet he uniformly speaks of the Trinitarians as people of "narrow prejudices," see particularly p. 31; of "weak superstition;" as "idolaters," p. 3; and as interpreting Scripture with a "laboured partiality." And speaking of Bishop Newton, he says, "amidst these extolled popular writers, and learned men in high offices in the Church, the generality of Christians have little chance for coming at the knowledge of Christ's true character." But Socinus and Erasmus and Dr. Clarke, &c. &c. though embracing doctrines very remote from the present Unitarian faith, are invariably learned and worthy, pious and sincere. But to come to the subject of this note. Mr. Lindsey is positive that the Scriptures represent our Saviour as having been "in all respects a human creature;" that is, that the mere humanity of Christ is undoubtedly the doctrine of the New Testament. Surely then it must be matter of reasonable surprise to Trinitarians, that this should

should seem not to have been at all clear, even to those who have been held to deny his proper divinity. Mr. Lindsey has noticed these errors of his friends in the work alluded to; and indeed it well became him to endeavour to account for them in some way or other. From his own statement then, it appears, that Socinus held, that “besides the one only true God of the Hebrew Church, the Christian Church acknowledges another true God, namely, the Man Jesus of Nazareth, called the Christ, who in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius was first born, exhibited and made known to the world, and had then the *Divine Majesty* bestowed upon him, by the Creator of heaven and earth.” This is Mr. Lindsey’s translation of Socinus’s own words, which he allows are more extraordinary in *him* than in an anonymous writer he cites directly afterwards, and whom he also *claims* as an *Unitarian*; but who, with Socinus, was an advocate for the worship of Christ, and who went so far as to propose the following as specimens of a becoming *mediatorial* worship of Christ. “I worship thee, the most high and independent God.” And again, (which I think no Trinitarian ever arrived to,) “I bow the knee before thee, the *immortal God*, who wast *slain*, and hast redeemed me to God *by thy blood*: to thee be glory for ever.”—“I do not wonder,” says Mr. Lindsey, that this worthy person, who appears convinced that prayer is to be addressed to Jesus Christ as a great *pre-existent Being*, but not the *Supreme*, should nevertheless so frequently style him *GOD*; and sometimes be drawn, as in these instances, to speak of him in language that can properly be used only of *HIM*, who is the only true God.” Now we must confess we are equally surprised at both, (if the mere humanity of Christ is the plain and evident doctrine of Scripture,) that Socinus and this anonymous writer, who are thought to be more than nominal *Unitarians*, should either have supposed from the words of Scripture, that Christ was to be invoked in prayer, or that he was, in any sense of the words, a true God. We are equally surprised, if the mere humanity of Christ is the plain doctrine of Scripture, that so learned and pious a Divine as Dr. Clarke should ever have thought

“ the

“ the same *Person*, who, according to St. John, in the  
 “ fulness of time was made man, and dwelt among us,  
 “ did *before* dwell *with God*, acted in the capacity of a  
 “ *divine Person*, as the visible *image of the invisible*  
 “ *God*, by whom God *made all things*, and by whom  
 “ all things were from the beginning transacted be-  
 “ tween God and the creature.” It does not satisfy  
 us to be told by Mr. Lindsey, that Dr. Clarke “did not  
 “ enough consider the objections which lay against such  
 “ an interpretation.”

Ruarus is another person claimed by Mr. Lindsey as  
 an Unitarian, and yet he scruples not to conclude an  
 epistle with Romans ix. 5. “ May the Lord Jesus,  
 “ who is God over all blessed for ever, pardon my  
 “ dulness.” The Latin of this last passage does not  
 appear; but of one immediately preceding we have the  
 Latin in a note, which runs thus: “ Si hoc est crimen  
 “ meum, sæculo contra ivisse, id mihi tecum ipso commu-  
 “ ne lætor, et cum omnibus viris probis, cum sanctis  
 “ Apostolis, cum ipso Domino ac Deo *meo* Jesu Christo.”  
*M. Ruari Epistolæ*, vol. ii. p. 86.

Bishop Hoadley obtains Mr. Lindsey’s praise for his  
 forms of prayer, which never conclude with any re-  
 quest to God for Christ’s *sake*. But after bestowing  
 this commendation, he laments, that the Bishop after-  
 wards adopts some of the prayers of the Liturgy which  
 end so, and one particularly which concludes, “ through  
 “ Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with thee, and the  
 “ Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without  
 “ end.”

Much of Mr. Lindsey’s book is taken up with an  
 account of Mr. Tucker, now well known to be the  
 author of “ The Light of Nature pursued,” published  
 under the fictitious name of Search. Mr. Lindsey as-  
 sures us he was a sincere Christian, and a firm believer of  
 the Divine Unity; and I see no reason to dispute it. If  
 he was not a believer also of the Trinity, I am much  
 mistaken, if his consent to this doctrine is to be mea-  
 sured by the difficulties he found to evade it. Mr.  
 Lindsey acknowledges he was driven to adopt “ in-  
 “ genious contrivances and refinements:” and so I  
 think any one will believe, when he is told, that, in or-  
 der to get rid of the Trinity, he conceives the Scrip-  
 tures



tures to represent God under a *triple* description, as one supreme Being acting in three *different* characters, Father, Son, and Spirit: he speaks also of "the divine operations being performed by three *Personæ* (Persons) in one God, not jointly, but each having a "distinct share in them." "The union with manhood, and all done in virtue of that union was the "work of the Son: the assistance afforded occasionally "to men in general was the province of the Holy "Spirit; and all the rest of the Father." There is much more to the same effect; but I shall state but one more expression: "It appears," says he, "that Jesus "was a real man, like unto us in all respects, sin "only excepted; and that the Divinity united to him, "which together with his human soul and body composed one Christ, was the supreme Being substantially and inseparably present with him, supplying all "imperfections in the created parts." How much is it to be lamented, says Mr. Lindsey, that this worthy and learned man should adopt such language, when he only intended to say, that the Man Christ Jesus had extraordinary powers and assistances from God above all other men! We know not what Mr. Tucker intended to say: we know what he has said. We believe that he was justly accounted worthy; and of his learning we have ample proofs. Can it then be supposed, that Mr. Tucker considered the tenets of modern Unitarians to be altogether consistent with the plain and evident language of the Scriptures? Could he conceive that the doctrine of the Trinity has no more foundation in the Scriptures than that of Transubstantiation? In regard to the atonement he trifles in a way unbecoming the seriousness of the subject, and not consistent with his general character. His object Mr. Lindsey represents to have been, to give to the Trinitarian forms of worship in the established Church, an Unitarian meaning. But as there is no doubt but that he meant to keep within the terms of the Scripture language, it must be evident how much the latter may be held to support or countenance the Trinitarian interpretation, Unitarians themselves being judges. Dr. Priestley's xviith ch. of his ivth book of the *Early Opinions concerning*  
r f
*Christ*

*Christ* may also be consulted : his *Philosophical Unitarians* were certainly much perplexed by the Scriptural expressions concerning *Christ*. See also the III<sup>d</sup> Part of *Edwards's Preservative against Socinianism*.

Page 376. note (6).

*Especially when, as in the former case, our Saviour did not deny the propriety of the inference they had drawn.]* Amidst the multiplicity of texts and passages, which have been made the subject of dispute and controversy, in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, if I was required to fix upon those, on which the doctrine might be most said to depend, I should certainly select this representation of our Saviour's conduct with the Jews, as the most striking, and one which no Socinian Criticism which has fallen in my way has appeared at all capable of setting aside. And I am the more assured it is a difficulty they never can get over, from one of the reasons stated by the celebrated M. Abauzit, who was certainly too acute to use such an argument, but in default of all others. He conjectures, that our Saviour would probably have explained himself more fully, had not the Jews taken up stones to cast at him, and by so doing obliged our blessed Lord to retire; "*obligé Jesus Christ à se retirer.*" Now it is remarkable, that our Saviour *did* explain himself, notwithstanding the Jews cast stones at him, and even "*sought to kill him:*" and in so doing, so far from shrinking from the charge of making himself equal with God, or explaining away his former declarations, he only increased the suspicions of the Jews the more, and aggravated their wrath against him : see John v. and x. Besides, at his trial he was not personally assaulted, or at all molested, when he was required to answer to the charge of blasphemy preferred by the High Priest. He must have known that any acknowledgment of his being the Son of God, in the Jewish sense of the terms, would subject him to the penalty of death ; and yet he never denied it. It is not surprising that the argument to be drawn from this circumstance of our Lord's conduct should have been so often and so much insisted on. The true merits of the case are admirably stated in Bishop Burgess's Sermon preached before the University of Oxford in 1790, entitled,

entitled, "*The Divinity of Christ proved from his own Declarations, attested and interpreted by his living Witnesses the Jews.*" I must acknowledge, that the arguments there used, had I not been previously assured of it, would have abundantly satisfied my mind of the propriety of regarding this as the *fundamental* proof of the doctrine of Christ's Divinity. See also *Leslie's Socinian Controversy*, Dial. III. and *Bp. Stillingfleet on Scripture Mysteries; Enchirid. Theolog.* vol. ii. 326. See also *Fuller's Socinian and Calvinistic Systems compared*, Letter III. where it is exceedingly well argued against the modern Unitarians, who represent the doctrine of the Trinity to be the main obstacle in the way of the conversion of Jews, Heathens, and Mahometans, (an old charge often refuted,) that if our Saviour's Divinity is a stumbling-block to modern Jews, they must greatly differ from their ancestors; for *they* appear to have always attached the idea of *equality* to that of *sonship* in respect of God: and the blasphemy of which they accused our Lord was not that of any infringement of the divine Unity, or Polytheism; but that he, as Jesus of Nazareth, pretended to be *the Son of God*: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou, BEING A MAN, MAKEST THYSELF GOD." John x. 33.

Page 378. note (7).

The interpretations I have put upon what are commonly called the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed, I conceive to be strictly justifiable from the very words of the Creed. The first clause only states the value and importance of the Catholic Faith, as *before all other things* necessary to salvation. The second represents the extreme danger of abandoning that Faith when once instructed in it, of suffering any superstitious additions to be made to it, or in allowing it to be defiled by any idolatrous abominations. It is only applicable to Christians already in the profession of the Faith, as the expressions shew. "Ante omnia opus est ut teneat Catholicam Fidem." And again, "Quam nisi quis integram servaverit." "Rogo et admoneo vos, fratres carissimi," says Cæsarius, (*Bishop of Arles in 503*), "ut quicumque vult salvus esse, Fidem rectam et Catholicam discat, firmiter teneat, inviolatamque conservet."

“servet.” The last clause of the Creed in its native language, as the learned Waterland calls it, runs, “Hæc est Fides Catholica, quam nisi quisque *fideliter*, “*firmiterque* crediderit, salvus esse non poterit:” with which he parallels the following passage from St. Austin; “Cavete dilectissimi, ne quis vos ab Ecclesiæ “Catholicæ Fide ac unitate *seducat*. Qui enim vobis aliter evangelizaverit præterquam quod accepistis, anathema sit.” *August.* tom. v. 592. So also we are told in clause 27. “That it is necessary we believe “*rightly* the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” For, says Dr. Waterland, to *corrupt* and *deprave* this doctrine is to defeat and frustrate, in a great measure, the whole Gospel of Christ, which bringeth salvation. Compare Heb. x. 38, 39. Upon the two first clauses, Professor Jenkin says, “But this supposes, that he hath “already attained, or is able to attain to the knowledge which is necessary to Faith; for no man can “hold that Faith, the *general* knowledge whereof he “cannot attain.” See more on the Athanasian Creed, in the 2d vol. of his *Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, p. 439.

Creeds and Catechisms appear to have given such offence to many, who choose to regard them as *intolerable restrictions*, and only of human invention, that I am inclined to agree with Dr. Waterland, that it would perhaps have been better if the more ancient title of this Creed in particular had been retained; *Expositio Catholicæ Fidei*; *Expositio Symboli Apostolorum*: for it is undoubtedly nothing more than an *explanation* of the true Trinitarian Faith, contained in the shorter summary of the Apostles’ Creed; an explanation, *every word* of which perhaps was immediately opposed to errors prevalent, in some shape or other, when it was first composed: for as it would not have been necessary, so it probably never would have been thought of, but for the prevalence and inveteracy of those very errors. It would be *easy* even now to point out the several specific heretical doctrines of antiquity, which it expressly opposes: but I much doubt if *modern times* are free from the very errors alluded to, though distinguished by different marks and different appellations. Among the Anti-Trinitarians of the present

sent day, though now generally reduced to Socinians and simple Unitarians; so little in agreement are they one with another, so much perplexed do they all appear to be in their expositions of the Scripture, and so *embarrassed* by the *literal terms*, that I doubt whether there are not still among them, as of old, *Arians, Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, Eutychians*, and perhaps every division and subdivision of every different heresy of ancient times. It is well therefore not to abandon this "*Pro-pugnaculum Primi Symboli Apostolici*," as Luther calls it. I am sorry it gives offence to the ignorant and unlearned: but indeed I think it is only to the ignorant and unlearned that it *need* give offence. And though it may be thought that *no* stumbling-block should be laid in the way of the unlearned; yet I am assured, that if this Profession of Faith was to be withdrawn, it would be the occasion of many worse stumbling-blocks being laid in their way. It would be made a cause of *triumph* to those who have gained *no victory*; and a great cause of *distrust* to those who, having *never been deceived*, may not, without great hazard to themselves, and great detriment to the *cause of truth*, be encouraged to entertain suspicions of it. This Profession of Faith excludes *none* from salvation but those who *will not* be saved. Nobody will be saved hereafter but by Christ; and that according to the Gospel-terms of salvation, whether known or unknown. To be acquainted with those terms is no indifferent matter: it is, in fact, to be no longer in darkness in regard to man's greatest glory and chiefest good; and therefore cannot but be "*before all things*" *desirable*; as a practical obedience to them, *after they are known*, must be "*before all things*" *necessary*." We may know from the expressions of those who still impugn the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, what a very serious and important difference there is between us. They interpret the Scriptures so, as to fancy it to be *idolatry* to worship Christ and the Holy Ghost: we interpret them so, as to believe, that if Christ was not God, and to all intents and purposes "*One with the Father*," he was a blasphemer; as the Jews, upon the *same* evidence, of his *own conduct and declarations*, concluded. They will not unite with us, for fear of being held to worship

the creature as much as the Creator: we will not unite with them, for fear of being guilty of denying the Lord who bought us, and withholding from *the Son* that honour which he himself assured us was due to him. The spirit of the damnatory clauses is truly Scriptural, provided the doctrine of the Creed is so: and as we believe the latter, we cannot inculcate it better, than in the strong terms of the Gospel, that so the consciences of men may be awakened, and their fears raised, and *seducers* have the less hold of them. None will question or dispute the merciful charity of the blessed Jesus; and yet in his holy Gospel there is mention but of two ways, one leading unto destruction, the other bringing unto life, (Matth. vii. 13, 14;) of two sorts of men, whereof some believe, and they are saved; some believe not, and they are damned, (Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 18;) and of two states, one blessed where Lazarus is, the other cursed where Dives abides, [Luke xvi.] Some of the most modern interpreters of this Creed, and those not only most eminent for their learning, but in the highest stations of the established Church, regard these clauses only as Scriptural admonitions, and by no means as denunciations: see the present *Bp. of Bangor's* excellent Sermon on the subject, preached before the University of Oxford, November 16, 1800; and *Bishop Burgess's Sermon on the Divinity of Christ*, mentioned in the preceding note. "It is not the writer of the Creed," says his Lordship, "nor the church, nor the minister, nor the communicants, who accompany him in the service, that denounce condemnation against unbelievers in the Catholic Faith: they pronounce the sentence of the Scripture, not their own wills and wishes. But objectors say," he adds, (and this ought certainly to be attended to,) "that the *Athanasian* doctrine is *not* the doctrine of Scripture; and therefore that the damnatory sentence against the disbelief of this doctrine is not the *sentence of Scripture*. When objectors to the *uncharitable* spirit of the damnatory clauses urge this, they desert the ground of their objection:" and nothing can be more true. The Scriptures alone must determine both the purity of the doctrine, and the validity of the sentence. At all events we may surely be permitted to pass sentence on ourselves;

selves ; and therefore where the original design of the Creed is not understood ; where for want of learning, and reading, and the study of ecclesiastical history, men are ignorant of the numberless heresies, and the infinite diversity of opinions that have been entertained upon the subject, from the first establishment of Christianity to the present day, by those who are desirous of being thought wise beyond what is written ; it may reasonably be received as an exposition of the Creed, calculated to *exonerate the true believer* from the imputation continually thrown upon him, *in spite of his own most solemn declarations* ; namely, that of believing in a Trinity of Persons, absolutely inconsistent with the Unity of the Godhead. This is a charge we deny. This we admit would be no better than idolatry. This we assert would not be to keep the Catholic Faith “ whole and unde-  
 “ filed.” This would be so foul an abomination in the sight of God, that, in our opinion, he that doth so wilfully, “ cannot be saved.” And therefore it may well deserve to be retained as a standing proof of our *sincerity*, against the very *uncharitable* charges of those who dissent from us ; who still continue, in defiance of all good manners, in defiance, as we think, of sound Criticism, and certainly in defiance of true Christian charity, to assert, that we *cannot believe what we profess to believe* ; though we maintain the contrary, at the hazard of the utmost penalties the Scriptures have denounced against those who are guilty of what our enemies most unjustly accuse us ; namely, the *foulest idolatry* ; the “ changing the truth of God for a lie,  
 “ and worshipping and serving the creature more than  
 “ the Creator, ΟΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΕΥΛΟΓΗΤΟΣ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΙ-  
 “ ΩΝΑΣ ΑΜΗΝ !”

Page 379. note (8).

*The proof of such an assertion would be sufficient to preclude all reasoning upon the subject.]* The Unitarians continually declare, that the Trinitarians affirm three *in numbers* to be but one, which “ to abide by and not  
 “ discern is not to be a man.” See this objection ably handled by *Bishop Stillingfleet on the Trinity*, p. 57. Where he properly asks, can they suppose, that before their time there were no men in the Church ; none of

common sense to tell the difference between one and three? It is a remarkable circumstance to this purpose, which the Bishop notices, that *Boethius*, equally skilful in philosophy and Christianity, wrote not only very learnedly on *arithmetic*, but very well, and very ably also, on the Catholic doctrine of the *Trinity*. Christ said, "I and my Father are one;" 'ΕΝ ΕΣΜΕΝ. We know, that the Unity of the Godhead is the main tenet of Revelation; therefore we must reconcile these. Dr. Priestley insinuates, that the Fathers would have said, there were three Gods; "but the Scriptures having expressly asserted the contrary, they could not do it in words." *Early Opinions*, vol. ii. 350. This is so far the case with *us*. We say not there are three Gods, because the Scriptures are express as to the Unity of the Godhead: but we nevertheless say, there are three that are God; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; because Christ hath told us so. In the form of baptism, whom could our Saviour mean by the *Son* but himself, the only begotten Son of God? Would he ever have so associated two *creatures* with God, in a form of baptism, into the faith and worship of his heavenly Father? See *Leslie*, vol. i. 348.

Mr. Hume says, though to persons of a certain turn of mind it may not appear altogether absurd, that several independent beings endowed with superior wisdom might conspire in the contrivance and execution of one regular plan, *yet this is a mere arbitrary supposition*. All things in the universe are evidently of a piece; and this uniformity leads the mind to acknowledge one author. All this may be granted; yet Mr. Hume adds a note exceedingly applicable, I think, to the question of the Trinity; which depends not on *arbitrary suppositions*, but on the *authority* whence we derive the doctrine. Mr. Hume's note is as follows: "The statue of Laocoon, as we learn from Pliny, was the work of three artists; but it is certain, that *were we not told so*, we should never have concluded, that a group of figures, cut from one stone, and united in one plan, was not the work and contrivance of one statuary. To ascribe any single effect to the combination of several causes, is not surely a natural and obvious supposition." Upon Pliny's authority Mr. Hume was  
contented



contented to believe, that three artists might have co-operated in the Laocoon, though *quite contrary* to the conclusion he should *naturally* have formed. In like manner the doctrine of the Trinity does not depend on any conclusions we may form from a mere contemplation of the universe; but totally and entirely on our Saviour's own declarations. It is therefore that I have very particularly insisted in my Sermon upon the propriety and utility of beginning all our enquiries into the doctrine of the Trinity, with the New Testament. If this doctrine does not seem, by reasonable and sound criticism, deducible from thence, we have no other foundation to rest on. For my own part, I look *solely* to the *New Testament* for the *revelation* of this doctrine; conceiving it to be quite immaterial, *as a previous question*, what traces of it are discoverable either among Jews or Pagans. For I think, that, supposing the doctrine true, we might reasonably conceive, that the *revelation* of it would be *chiefly* reserved for the time of the Messiah. Before the Messiah became incarnate, the world was not in any need of knowing that the unity of the Godhead extended to three Persons, though such a circumstance might have been revealed, if God saw fit. The Jewish and Pagan Trinities would certainly seem to prove, that it *had* pleased God to make such a discovery of his mode of existence from the very earliest ages: but still the incarnation of the second Person, and his written word, are the principal, if not the only authorities, both in point of time and record, that I should think it absolutely necessary to refer to. St. Austin acknowledges, that he found much of the Christian doctrine in Plato; but that the incarnation of the *Logos* was still peculiar to the Gospel. "Sed quia Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis, non ibi legi." *Confess. Op.* vol. i. p. 128.

In a recent publication of Dr. Jamieson, on the *Use of Sacred History*, the learned author observes; "The Incarnation of the second Person of the holy Trinity is the great revelation of the New Testament: there therefore we are to look for it. But that the same second Person should be the *appearing* Divinity of the Old Testament, is highly probable, from the terms of Scripture, the opinions of the Jews themselves, and

“and the consistency of the thing. So far the Jews  
 “may be said to have had the Trinity revealed: but  
 “its full revelation is to be sought for in the New  
 “Testament only; in the act and accomplishment of  
 “the redemption.”

That traces, not at all obscure, of a Trinity in Unity, and in some instances perhaps of a Trinity of Persons, and Unity of Divinity, are discoverable in the records of all nations, cannot be denied. But I must confess, that had it never been revealed to either Jew or Gentile, till the incarnation of the Messiah, this would have been a circumstance in no way interfering with *my* belief, had it been as clearly discoverable as I think it now is in the *New Testament*. The difficulties that have arisen also concerning the late admission of the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit, would occasion me no embarrassment; no, not though it should appear to have arisen, as Dr. Priestley intimates, out of the doctrine and divinity of the *Λόγος*: for I think the form of baptism alone might lead us to make the enquiry, and to bring us to the conclusion, that as there is a Father, and Son, so also a Holy Spirit, in the Unity of the Godhead. If in this I differ from Mr. Maurice, who has lately taken such great pains to elucidate the subject, and to whom we are so much indebted for his very learned account of the Asiatic Trinities, it is not for want of duly considering his arguments, or the very curious analogies he has been at the pains to trace: but I must confess I do not quite agree with him, that if “the doctrine of the Trinity could not be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, as clearly revealed as circumstances would admit, its being a genuine doctrine of Christianity might justly be suspected.” *Indian Antiquities*, vol. iv. There is only one case, in which I think this of importance; and that is, in regard to the personal character of our blessed Lord, as represented in the *Jewish prophecies*: and in this particular instance I think it has been very clearly proved, and especially of late by *Bishop Huntingford*, in his work on the *Trinity*, that the Prophets had a clear apprehension of the exalted nature of our Lord; and that, as well as the Evangelists, if they describe him sometimes as a man, at others they attribute to him also the brightest and most

most indisputable marks of Divinity. Believing the Trinity to be the doctrine of the New Testament, I consider the Jewish and Pagan Trinities as remarkable confirmations of it; not *essential* to the *verification* of our Lord's own declarations, but *exceedingly corroborative* of that interpretation of our Lord's words, which *Trinitarians have adopted*.

As to the Christian Trinity being a copy of the Oriental, or a modification of the Platonic Trinity, the grounds on which we profess to believe it render all such doubts and suspicions nugatory. The records from which *we* deduce it are in our hands. Whatever the Socinians may pretend, even if the Ante-Nicene Fathers in general had not professed any belief in the Trinity, neither *their* omission of the doctrine, nor yet *Justin Martyr's* adoption of it, would determine our faith. If any of the Fathers have overlooked it, or any of them Platonised in their expositions of it, this is really nothing to us. We say it is still in the *Scriptures*; we say it is undoubtedly deducible from the terms and expressions there used, by fair and impartial criticism. The testimony of our Saviour is paramount to every other. To pretend that he borrowed the doctrine, is absurd; because there are some who deny that it ever was his doctrine: and as to those who believe otherwise, if it was possible to prove him capable of *borrowing* such a doctrine, so far from being God, he could not have been a Prophet of God, but a Pagan and Impostor; and thus we should be brought back to the first evidences and credentials of Christianity, which tend to shew, that in the nature of things *it was impossible he could be either*. To pretend that it is a *corruption* of Christianity is also nothing to the purpose; and Dr. Priestley might have spared himself the pains, both of questioning the orthodoxy of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, and of exposing the many inadequate explanations of the Trinity, that he has raked together: for while we have reason to think we have the very words of Christ to judge from, we can be responsible only for our *own* criticisms, our *own* interpretations, and our *own* opinions.



---

## S E R M O N VIII.

---

PSALM cxlvii. 19, 20.

*He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel.*

*He hath not dealt so with any nation; neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws.*

**I**N this divine hymn we have a lively description of the providence of God, as it is to be collected from a view and consideration of the natural effects of the visible world. “Great is our Lord, and great is  
“his power; yea, and his wisdom is infinite.  
“Who covereth the heaven with clouds,  
“and prepareth rain for the earth; and  
“maketh the grafs to grow upon the mountains, and herb for the use of men. Who  
“giveth fodder unto the cattle, and feedeth  
“the young ravens that call upon him. He  
“maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth  
“thee

“ thee with the flour of wheat. He giveth  
 “ snow like wool, and scattereth the hoar-  
 “ frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice  
 “ like morsels; who is able to abide his  
 “ frost? He sendeth out his word, and melt-  
 “ eth them; he bloweth with his wind, and  
 “ the waters flow.” Such providential acts  
 of goodness, daily exhibited before our eyes,  
 should be sufficient to encourage us to repose  
 a confidence in the Almighty, under any  
 pressure of misfortune and calamity, and  
 notwithstanding any speculative doubts, that  
 may chance to arise in our minds, from the  
 temporary prevalence of evil and distress.  
 But, says the holy Psalmist, (as a more sure  
 and certain encouragement to his despond-  
 ing countrymen,) in addition to all these  
 natural notices of his providential care and  
 concern for his creatures, in addition to these  
 conspicuous and continual mercies, which  
 are common to us with the heathens, “ Un-  
 “ to thee, O Jacob, he has given his *word* ;  
 “ his *statutes* and his *ordinances* unto Israel.  
 “ He hath not dealt so with any nation ;  
 “ neither have the heathen knowledge of  
 “ his LAWS.”

Such was the holy Psalmist's opinion of  
 the

the distinction between natural religion and revealed. He was wise and considerate enough to acknowledge Revelation to be a great and most singular privilege and blessing ; an additional security to all that could be supplied by the reason of man, from a contemplation of the visible works of God. And the wise and prudent of all ages might well be expected to make the same acknowledgment ; for it is not too much to say, considering the deplorable blindness and ignorance, into which those nations have fallen, who have lost or neglected the benefits of revealed knowledge, the difference is no less than between light and darkness, truth and error. Nevertheless, there have always been many in the world who have thought otherwise, and who, so far from regarding Revelation as any valuable or necessary addition to the light of nature, have both questioned its utility, and denied its existence. And this brings me, in prosecution of the original plan of these Lectures, to consider, under the head of ETHICS, the present state of *moral* philosophy, as *opposed* to, or *independent* of, divine Revelation.

So much has been said and written upon  
the

the subject of the sufficiency of human Reason to discover a rule of life<sup>(1)</sup>, that it must be quite unnecessary to discuss this point at present: and as it has rather been the object of these Lectures to grant all that can with any degree of propriety be granted, and to draw conclusions from the state of the several questions after such concessions, I shall propose to admit, that human Reason might *possibly* have discovered every precept of morality to be found in the Scriptures. This is indeed to grant as much as can be with any reason expected<sup>a</sup>; for as to the purity and excellency of the Christian precepts, I believe no Deist pretends to dispute them; while it is quite certain, that no system of pure Reason wholly free from exceptions has ever been known to exist, from one end of the earth to the other.

The utmost the human Reason has ventured to charge Christianity with, as a system of morality, is, first, the pretence of a divine interposition, where no necessity ex-

<sup>a</sup> See, as to the Christian precepts *not to be found* in Pagan writers, a Tract, intitled, *The Strength and Weakness of human Reason*, 2d edit. 1737. p. 188.



ifted: fecondly, a few omiffions and exceffes, which have been firft invented in order to flander her, and then exceedingly magnified in the handling of them: and thirdly, (an objection which would fcarcely have been thought of, had any more folid ones been to be found,) that the Chriftian fyftem is deficient in arrangement and philofophical precifion.

In regard to the neceffity of God's interpoftion for moral purpofes, I conceive no one even of this boafled age of Reafon would have the hardihood to maintain, that it will ever be in the power of man fo to enforce his precepts, as to render them binding on the heart and difpofition. And yet, is the *ſpeculative* morality of individuals a matter of ſmall concern? Reafon has pretended indeed to deviſe reſtraints for the *Atheiſt*: but the ſhifts ſhe has been driven to, to ſupport her pretenſions, muſt, I think, for ever be regarded as the moſt conclusive evidence of her extreme weakneſs. The love of glory, and regard to reputation, for inſtance, are the ſanctions ſhe would fix upon to enforce morality among Atheiſts: and when it is objected, that this only provides

for the open and conspicuous conduct of the Atheist, not for any secret sins he may be guilty of; any concealed indulgence of base and immoral practices; such consummate wits as *Lucretius* and *Bayle* could invent no further restraints, but the apprehension, which the Atheist might feel, lest his hypocrisy and artifice should come to be discovered in the wanderings of a disturbed sleep, or the paroxysms of a fever.

The absurdity of so precarious a restraint is too manifest to be much insisted on; nor indeed is it on account of its mere absurdity, that I have adduced an instance so well known, and already so well exposed<sup>b</sup>; but because it particularly serves to demonstrate, on the implied acknowledgment of Deists, if not of Atheists themselves, the absolute necessity of a divine will, an all-seeing Judge, and a future state, to give effect to the very best moral laws: and that the question relating to the sufficiency of human systems of ethics must ultimately turn, not on the force or propriety of the precepts, but on the want of proper motives, and adequate

<sup>b</sup> *Divine Legation of Moses*, b. i. §. 5.

sanctions;

sanctions ; and that this is a point, which Reason cannot get over. I do not deny, that Reason has attempted it, as in the case adduced above : but it may be further remarked, that if her pretensions were *just*, so far from proving any thing against the necessity of Revelation, this in itself would tend, I think, particularly to establish it. For if we grant what has been required and insisted upon, in this instance, namely<sup>c</sup>, that the Atheist is capable, to a certain degree, of the moral sense ; that he may have competent ideas of the essential difference between good and evil ; that he may be as sensible as the Theist to the temporary applause of the world, and all outward circumstances of honour and reputation : still should these things serve to secure his obedience to the laws of right and reason, where his own purposes are to be answered by them ; yet, not being decisively obligatory, they *give no security to the Theist* ; they only serve so much the more to expose *him* to

<sup>c</sup> See Toland's *Adeisidæmon* ; Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, vol. ii. 267 ; Bayle's *Pensées diverses sur la Comète*, c. 179 ; and Diderot's *Système de la Nature*.

the artful and infidious attempts of the Atheist, and to supply the latter with a protection and defence against the just suspicions of the rest of mankind. If Reason therefore was sufficient to discover such motives for the right government and conduct of our lives, motives as applicable to the Atheist as the Theist; yet, for the peace, and happiness, and security of the world, a divine Revelation would still be, on this very account, peculiarly necessary. For it is certainly not only of importance to us to know upon what motives we ought to act ourselves; but it is, generally speaking, of exceeding great importance also, that we should know what motives govern others.

What security can we have, that others will act upon the same principles two days together, who acknowledge no other foundation for their moral conduct, but the speculative judgment of themselves, or their fellow men? What security can we have, that the man who to-day thinks himself responsible for the results of a deliberate choice, shall not to-morrow fall into the wildest notions of moral necessity, and discharge himself of all responsibility whatsoever

ever for the consequences of his own actions? What security can we have, that he who might readily be brought to see the absurdity of disputing the authority, or questioning the veracity, of a *divine* Instructor, may not become suddenly and secretly disposed both to renounce the authority, and distrust the veracity and abilities of a mere human legislator? In the case of the Jews abroad, whom I alluded to in my third Discourse, it has been well urged against them<sup>d</sup>, that in renouncing their belief of the *divine* origin of their law, so far from bettering their condition in Christian societies, which was the object of their address, they would do well to consider that their present toleration, privileges, and immunities, were to be ascribed to their supposed acknowledgment of the same God, and submission to his *revealed* will; that much of their credit among Christians necessarily depended on their acknowledgment of the *divine authority* of the Decalogue; and that it was the height

<sup>d</sup> See *M. de Luc's Lettre aux Juifs, Auteurs d'un Mémoire adressé à M. Teller*, §. 7.

of absurdity to imagine, that by abandoning Moses and the Prophets, and reducing their laws of morality, and the Decalogue in particular, to a level with the merely human conceptions of Plato, Socrates, or more particularly their own cotemporary Mendelsohn, they would produce a greater confidence among Christians, either as to the duties they were willing to impose on themselves, or their steadiness in practising them.

And this is assuredly most true : for who would be contented to rest the safety of his property, of his reputation, and good name, or of his domestic comforts, on the casual interpretation of the book of nature, on the talents of their fellow-creatures for ratiocination and reflection, on their judgment and metaphysical conclusions, on their self-formed opinions of right and wrong, and whatever distinctions of just and unjust they may happen to fix upon ; who might have the security of a divine law, not only written on tables of stone, but deeply impressed on the heart of every neighbour and fellow-creature, with the weight and force of a celestial mandate, “THOU SHALT NOT STEAL,” “THOU  
“ SHALT

“ SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,” “ THOU  
“ SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS,” “ THOU  
“ SHALT NOT COVET ?”

Let any man consider the names, the reputation, the consequence of those speculative philosophers of this boasted age of Reason, who have ventured to assert, that a divine revelation is unnecessary for the enforcement of the laws of morality; and let him then decide upon the necessity merely with a view to his own happiness and security, as arising out of the confidence he would wish to repose in his neighbours and associates. I would venture to affirm, that no appeal could be made more likely to evince the positive and indispensable necessity of an express revelation of the will of God, in cases of mere morality, or that have regard to the duties of social intercourse. And this is an appeal which involves no question concerning the advancement of human knowledge, or the talents and abilities of particular writers; it relates distinctly to the *principle*, not the *precepts*, of morality. I only require every man to determine for himself, from the dictates of his own heart, and his own feelings, whether it is at all probable, or even possible,

that any principle of universal obligation, and unquestionable authority, can be discovered and put in force by mere human Reason (<sup>2</sup>).

That such a principle has not yet been discovered I have a right to assume, from the concessions of modern philosophers themselves ; morality being expressly enumerated among those things which the system of *perfectibility* is to advance and improve<sup>c</sup>. One writer congratulates himself, that the time is come for shewing morality to be a *physical* and *geometrical* science, and as such susceptible of calculation and mathematical demonstration<sup>f</sup>.

To which I should be tempted to reply, (without the least intention to deny the great use and importance of method and arrangement in all systems purely human, or the least wish to depreciate unnecessarily either the labours or the talents of modern moralists ; but with a view only to the *prin-*

<sup>c</sup> “ There is no science that is not capable of additions ; no art that may not be carried to a still higher perfection. If this be true of all other sciences, why not of morals ? ” *Polit. Just.* 2d edit. b. i. c. 8.

<sup>f</sup> See the Advertisement prefixed to the English 12mo edition of *Volney's Law of Nature*.



*ciple* of morality,) that the time for this geometrical system of morality is indeed arrived, if we will consent to abandon the exquisite simplicity of Christian ethics, for the complexity of modern classifications<sup>g</sup>; the natural dictates of feeling and affection, for the intricate deductions of moral and metaphysical calculations<sup>h</sup>; if we will consent to abandon those sublime but intelligible principles both of religion and morality, the love of God, and the love of man, for the precarious principle of “utility,” or the glorious “omnipotence of truth;” if we will consent to be governed by rule rather than sentiment; to be actuated by an

<sup>g</sup> See the Edinburgh Review of *Mr. Bentham's Principes de Législation*, No. vii. art. 1.

<sup>h</sup> See *Lloyd's Christian Theology*, 253, 254. Note. “Morality itself is nothing but a calculation of consequences—” “an estimate of consequences.” *Godwin*. “How is it,” says Mr. Hall, in his excellent Discourse on the Fast 1803, “that, after the lapse of six thousand years, we have, in contempt of the experience of past ages, undertaken to *manufacture* a morality of our own; to decide by a calculation of interest, by a ledger-book of profit and loss, the preference of truth to falsehood, of piety to blasphemy, and of humanity and justice to treachery and blood?” See also the Edinburgh Review referred to above, for some excellent remarks on the modern systems of *moral arithmetic*.

artificial rather than a real sensibility ; and to have every emotion, every feeling, and every action towards our fellow-creatures fixed and determined by the precise claims of moral worth and rigid justice<sup>i</sup>; so hazardous to judge of, so difficult to adjust !

I have already had occasion to speak of the great uncertainty of modern metaphysics in determining the principles of human actions; and it is no small objection to modern ethics, that they are made to depend so much upon them. It is not enough now that the moralist shall be able to suggest motives ; motives must be analysed, and their operations accounted for in the fullest manner<sup>k</sup>. It is not thought sufficient to direct

<sup>i</sup> “ Justice would require,” says Mr. Godwin, “ that if Fenelon and his valet were in equal danger from fire, the valet himself ought to choose rather to die than Fenelon should. Was the former my brother, father, or benefactor, I ought still to prefer the life of Fenelon, as more valuable. What magic is there in the pronoun ‘ *My*,’ to overturn the decisions of impartial truth ? I ought to prefer no human being to another because that being is my father, my wife, or my son ; but because, for reasons which equally appeal to all understandings, that being is entitled to preference.” *Pol. Just.* vol. ii.

<sup>k</sup> See *Brown on the Characteristics*, p. 158. “ And here we shall find another metaphysical cloud resting upon *this* path,  
“ in

the human faculties to their true end, and point out proper means; but the nature and infallibility of such faculties must be previously determined; their comparative energies, and their very existence, proved and demonstrated. And if such speculations could increase our certainty, or fix morality on a surer basis, they might well be commended and encouraged: but conducted as they have been of late, they certainly tend only to involve us in greater perplexities, to supply continual fresh matter of doubt and disputation, and to unsettle our confidence in other and far better principles, immutable in their nature, and of universal obligation.

Nor is it saying too much to affirm of modern theories, as has been said of the ancient ones, that there has been nothing adduced by one modern philosopher that has

“ in itself plain and easy to all mankind : for the very notion  
 “ of the *motives* to virtue hath been as much confounded by  
 “ moral writers, as the idea of virtue itself. And here we  
 “ might travel through another system of logomachies ; while  
 “ one asserts, that we ought to be *moved* to love and *pursue* vir-  
 “ tue because she is *beautiful* ; another, because virtue is *good* ;  
 “ another, because virtue is *good* in itself ; a fourth, because vir-  
 “ tue is *truth* ; a fifth, because it is agreeable to *nature* ; a sixth,  
 “ because it is agreeable to the *nature* of *things*.”

not

not been contradicted and opposed by another. Two of the most popular writers of the continent, Rousseau and Helvetius, differed totally and essentially in regard to the principles of their respective systems. Rousseau insisted continually on the original purity and goodness of man : Helvetius speaks of man as radically bad <sup>1</sup>. According to the former, every virtue under heaven is to be found among the savage tribe : according to Helvetius, savages have no notion of justice or humanity, or even natural affection. According to Rousseau, education and example are for ever the corruptors of primitive purity and native innocence : according to Helvetius, only education and example can render men feeling and humane <sup>m</sup>. According to Rousseau,

<sup>1</sup> Helvetius pretends indeed to deny this ; and asserts, that he differs from Rousseau only in *this* ; that as the latter pretends that man is born without vice, so *he* would maintain that he is equally born without virtue. But though Helvetius has admirably detected some of Rousseau's contradictions, he could not see his own ; for the following is his account of the state of nature. “ Quel seroit dans toute société l'homme *le plus détestable* ? l'homme de la NATURE, qui n'ayant point fait de convention avec ses semblables, n'obéiroit qu'à *son caprice* et au sentiment actuel qui l'inspire.” See also below.

<sup>m</sup> “ La nature en avoit fait des fangliers.”

men are the best law to themselves : according to Helvetius, before the existence of settled compacts and instituted laws, there can be neither peace nor justice among men. Helvetius differs as widely from our own countrymen, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson; declaring, in terms of ridicule and contempt, that he could no more form an idea of a moral sense, than of a moral castle, or a moral elephant!

Such are the discordances of modern ethics and modern metaphysics<sup>a</sup>, without touching again on the endless disputes on the subjects of necessity and materialism, which I had particular occasion to allude to before; such are the discordances which have respect only to the *principle* of morality. But philosophers are little less agreed as to precepts and to duties; which is not to be wondered at, when we consider that, with some, the passions require to be restrained by the moral sense; with others, the passions themselves are the only moral sense we have to trust to : with some, nature is an unerring guide

<sup>a</sup> Consult also Dr. Dwight's two Discourses referred to in Note (2).

to all that is good, and fit, and right ; with others, the dictates of nature are made an excuse for all that is base and horrible ; for revenge, for suicide, for oppression, for ambitious war, for lust and rapine.

But let us not, in avoiding one error, fall into another. The high importance of Christianity as a code of moral laws must not lead us to suppose that it is nothing more. This is an error, which, I am sorry to say, has infected some, who might well be expected to judge more highly of Christianity. We find it strongly expressed in one publication °, which, (to rob no man of his good name,) the public have been informed, is written by a determined enemy to real impiety ; so good a *moral* Christian, (the warmth and beauty of the praise will, I hope, excuse my repetition of it,) that with a scanty income, and no (known) prospects of ecclesiastical preferment, he “ administers  
“ medicine to the sick, gives alms to the  
“ needy, offers instruction to the ignorant,  
“ visits the fatherless and widows in their  
“ affliction, and keeps himself in no com-

° See *Fellowes's “ Religion without Cant.”*

“ mon degree unspotted from the world <sup>p</sup>.” I have to lament the necessity of combating opinions so recommended, and so supported: but the error is great, and the more dangerous from the very support it has received. In a publication of the person so highly and, no doubt, so justly commended for its great moral worth, we not only find the general proposition laid down, that “ *Christianity is nothing more than a rule of life,*” but a wish is expressed, that “ *this should be made the subject of every religious discourse, so that one Church might serve for all.*” And indeed this could not fail to be the case: one Church may serve for all, when the doctrinal parts of the Gospel are so slightly accounted of, that Jew, Turk, Infidel, and Heretic, may have free leave to expunge or discredit whatever respectively opposes their several ideas. One Church may serve for all, when all that human Reason sees fit to object to shall be given up on that very account. Instead of our converting Infidels by such accommodation, as has

<sup>p</sup> See the Notes to *Parr's Spital Sermon*, p. 81.

been well observed, Infidels may thus obtain the credit of converting *us*.

For individual opinions there is no accounting; but *references* we may be allowed to question: and in proof of the proposition thus insisted upon, we find no less authorities cited, than Bishop Taylor, Clarke, and Cave. Not to dispute the meaning of some detached passages, that may be selected from the works of these great men, in favour of Christian morality, (and perhaps too strongly expressed, in order to meet the more dangerous errors of fanaticism prevalent in their days, and which has been shewn to have been the case with some of our best divines <sup>a</sup>;) I shall content myself with selecting some passages from one of these great authorities; of which the least we can say is, that they can by no means be reconciled with the notion and opinion, that the Christian dispensation is *nothing more than a rule of life*.

Now, in the incomparable writings of Bishop Taylor, I find the Gospel dispensa-

<sup>a</sup> See the last chapter of *Warburton on Grace*.



tion described in the following terms. Speaking of the glorious mysteries revealed in the Gospel by the inspiration of the Spirit, “what power of the human understanding,” saith he, “could have conjectured that God should so love us, as to be willing to be reconciled to us, and yet that himself must die that he might pardon us?” And speaking of repentance, he calls it such a grace “as could not have been granted, unless Christ had died to purchase it.” And again, speaking of the soul of man, “In God’s account,” saith he, “it is valued at the price of the blood, and shame, and tor- tures of the Son of God.” It is true, in his Sermon upon the Miracles of the Divine Mercy, he *does* say, “the whole religion of a Christian is nothing but justice and mercy:” but, that he might not be misunderstood, he particularly adds, “*as it relates to others.*” And we say the same; and the Prophets said the same. The Christian religion, as it relates to the social duties of a Christian, is nothing but justice and mercy;

<sup>r</sup> Sermon on Whitsunday.

<sup>s</sup> Sermon. XII. p. 114.

<sup>t</sup> Sermon. XIX. p. 118.

<sup>u</sup> Sermon. XXVI. p. 252.

it is as it regards the individual, or the species in general, that it is of infinitely more importance: "For," to apply again the words of the same high authority, "what is  
 " the secret of the mystery; *That the Son of*  
 " *God should take upon him our nature, and*  
 " *die our death, and suffer for our sins, and*  
 " *do our work, and enable us to do our*  
 " *own*!" It cannot surely with any fairness be alleged after this, that Bishop Taylor regarded Christianity as "*nothing more than a*  
 "*rule of life*!"<sup>(3)</sup> These characters of Christianity, as they regard our conduct, involve duties of a peculiar nature owing to God; not only as our Creator, but as our Redeemer. They involve the duties of *piety and devotion*; of *love, reverence, adoration, submission, affiance, resignation*<sup>y</sup>; of *prayer, confession of sins, thanksgiving, praise*. These involve, as the indispensable *fruits* of our *faith in Christ*, the duties owing to ourselves; *self-government, chastity, purity, humility, temperance*; and the proper regulation of our appetites and passions: none of which

<sup>x</sup> Serm. XXVII. p. 264.

<sup>y</sup> See *Leland's Deistical Writers*, Letter xxxv.

are sufficiently provided for, if even so much as thought of, in many of the “*rational*” systems of the present day. And it is not to be passed over, that though the author of the *Age of Reason* could consent to adopt into *his creed* the two duties of “doing justly” and “loving mercy,” in the very terms used by the Prophet, instead of the other beautiful precept of the inspired writer, “the walking humbly with his God,” *he* thought fit to substitute a social virtue of easier practice. But to return from this digression.

Christianity has been accused both of omissions and excesses in the *preceptive* parts. I have already observed, that these were first invented in order to slander her, and then exceedingly magnified in the handling of them ; and nothing, I think, can be more true. They have certainly been *invented*, because, in regard to the *omissions* that have been more particularly insisted upon, it is easy to prove, and it *has* been *amply* proved, that all that is true and sound and valuable, in patriotism, friendship, and valour, if not directly enjoined in the Gospel, is certainly *virtually* recommended

there : and if they are recommended there rather as branches of universal benevolence, philanthropy, and charity, than as distinct virtues, it is expressly to the exclusion of all that contributed to render them exceptionable as Pagan and heroic virtues. Nor is it less easy to prove, in respect to the *excesses* with which Christianity stands charged, that while no virtue which she inculcates, and which is designed to be of *general* obligation, does in the least exceed the bounds, which the calmest reason of mankind would approve, every precept that carries the aspect of peculiar restraint, such as the non-resistance of evil, perpetual patience, and a neglect of all we eat, drink, and wear, is palpably confined to the first Apostles, who, from the very nature of their high and important functions, were to exhibit *extraordinary* examples of mildness, patience, and benignity; and even as applicable to the Apostles, *common sense* might serve to point out to us, that they do not require to be urged or understood to the utmost extent of the letter.

How much both these omissions and excesses have been *magnified*, cannot be better evinced

evinced than in the case just alluded to ; the temporary injunctions laid upon the Apostles, having first been unwarrantably, and in one instance very injudiciously<sup>2</sup>, extended to Christians of all ages, and of every denomination, and then adduced to prove even this extraordinary principle, that “ *God had constituted a world upon one plan, and a religion for it on another.*” Patriotism and friendship have also been grossly misrepresented, and with different views. As Pagan virtues they have at one time been extravagantly extolled, in order to fasten a reproach on Christianity for the *omission* of them in the Gospel ; while at another time they have been vilified in such unqualified terms, through an indiscreet design of *vindicting* their *omission*, as to render them (though, under proper regulations, so important to society in general, as well as to individuals in particular) apparently incompatible with the spirit of our most holy religion. But as *these* misrepresentations of Christiani-

<sup>2</sup> See Mr. Jenyns's *Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*.

ty have been repeatedly noticed and admirably exposed by various writers, I need not take up more of your time with them at present (\*).

It is further objected to Christianity, that, as a system, it is deficient in arrangement and philosophical precision. This might be an objection, if morality depended altogether upon arrangement, or philosophical precision was its principal excellence. I have already observed how much is to be attributed to arrangement and precision in systems purely human; but in *divine* laws, perspicuity and authority are all we have to attend to.

One would imagine, that the two great commandments of the Gospel, the Law, and the Prophets, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind, and thy neighbour as thyself,” were not *materially deficient* in arrangement or philosophical precision: and yet one modern philosopher of no small celebrity has ventured to pass his censure upon the latter, and to assure us, with some mixture indeed of faint commendation, that “it is not modelled with the strictness of philosophical  
“ accu-

“accuracy.” If it has the divine authority to back it, it may well be excused for its want of philosophical accuracy, more especially as in its own sublime simplicity it stands clear of many philosophical doubts, which might for ever obstruct our view of the duties required of us. It is further explained by the precept, that “*we should do unto others, as we would they should do unto us ;*” that is, under a supposed change of circumstances, which is manifestly implied (<sup>5</sup>). And how many difficulties, both metaphysical and moral, might be settled by this one rule of action ! How does such a precept recommend itself to our observance ? Is it left to depend on any vague notions of a moral fitness or unfitness of actions ? on any nice and critical discernment of moral beauty or moral deformity ? It is made to depend in fact on nothing merely theoretical or speculative ; but on two of the most simple principles, by which a rational being is governed, sensation and reflection. Nor does it require any nice and curious discrimination of time, per-

<sup>a</sup> *Godwin's Pol. Just.* vol. i. p. 126. See Dr. Parr's note upon this remark in his *Spital Sermon*, p. 41.

fons, places<sup>b</sup>; all these are provided, for by the very occasion that occurs, be it what it may. The most untutored peasant must know, for he must *feel*, that under any trouble or affliction he would wish to be treated kindly, and under all circumstances whatsoever, justly and fairly. Nor could the *obligation* be doubtful: we *must* be sure, that we should think others morally obliged to help us and to serve us under certain given circumstances, and therefore this sense of *their* obligation should point out to us our own duty. It is remarkable besides, how in this precept, the selfish and philanthropic systems, upon which there has been so much

<sup>b</sup> “ This is a peculiar advantage of this rule, (inferring the  
 “ excellent wisdom and goodness of him who framed it,) that by  
 “ it very easily and certainly we may discern all the specialties  
 “ of our duty, without looking abroad, or having recourse to ex-  
 “ ternal instructions; so that by it we may be perfect law-  
 “ givers, and skilful judges, and faithful monitors to ourselves  
 “ of what in any case we should do. For every one by internal  
 “ experience knoweth what it is to love himself; every one is  
 “ conscious how he useth to treat himself; each one conse-  
 “ quently can prescribe and decide for himself, what he ought to  
 “ do toward his neighbour; so that we are not only Θεοδιδάκτοι,  
 “ taught of God, as the Apostle saith, to love one another, but  
 “ αὐτοδιδάκτοι, taught of ourselves how to exercise that duty.”  
*Barrow's Sermons*, vol. i. 337.



dispute, are here blended together. Universal benevolence is not left to depend on any such visionary notions, as that self and kindred<sup>c</sup>, friends and relations, are to be passed over: here it is left to originate in *self*, which, for wise purposes, and not for the encouragement of any extravagant or exclusive self-love<sup>d</sup>, has been rendered of the most interesting importance to us; so that in making self the object of every social duty, by such a supposed change of circumstances, what would otherwise be relative becomes personal; and our own feelings are made the judge, and our own rights and claims the measure of every duty; and the sanction which the holy Gospel has provided is most appropriate; “*For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*” Luke vi. 38.

But through what intricate roads and perplexed ways must we travel to arrive at this precept, metaphysically! that is, according to the modern method of tracing

<sup>c</sup> See a long note in *Lloyd's Christian Theology*, p. 232, published 1804; *Hall's Discourse on Modern Infidelity*, p. 61. 6th edit.; and *Fuller's Gospel its own Witness*, p. 30.

<sup>d</sup> See *Fuller on Deism*, pp. 50, 51. 2d edit.

out the principles of morality. Our sensations must first be analysed, then our powers of reflection; and it is a great chance if our enquiries do not terminate in such scepticism as tends to the denial of both. Our relation to other beings must undergo such a scrutiny, that, instead of being made clear and convincing, we shall lose perhaps much of our conviction, that we are even related to ourselves. Whatever fitness or unfitness may appear in such or such actions, we may not depend on them, till we have ascertained, not only the faculty by which such fitness or unfitness is perceived, but whether, after all, the fitness or unfitness be in the actions themselves, or only in our own minds. But it would be endless to pursue these matters further, and it is fit that I should come to a conclusion.

Human knowledge is of the utmost importance, and we may well contemplate its progress with admiration and delight: we may well rejoice in that spirit of research and enquiry, which may truly be said to have distinguished the age we live in; that insatiable curiosity, that critical sagacity, that nice discernment, that indefatigable industry,

try, which have been of late applied with so much effect, and so much benefit, to natural philosophy in all its branches, and which never were, nor ever I think can be, exceeded. But let us not fancy, that, because so much is doing, and so much has been found to do, in some particular branches of knowledge, nothing has been done in others, in times past. “In *this* part of knowledge, in *divine philosophy*,” says the great Lord Bacon, in his most curious estimate of the learning of *his* times, “so far from noting any deficiency, I rather note an excess.” And the remark is but too applicable to the times in which *we* live. In religion and morality there is no deficiency; no room for improvement, no want of the aid and support of human philosophy. To apply the words of an excellent writer, “Christianity, issuing perfect and entire from the hands of its Author, will admit of no mutilations, nor any improvement. It is dogmatic; not capable of being advanced with the progress of science, but fixed and immutable.”

\* See *Hall's Fast Sermon*, and *Lloyd's Christian Theology*, pp. 65, 66.

Let us never then be induced to abandon this great light, to follow after the phantoms of a disputatious philosophy. Let the philosopher pursue his researches into the things of the earth ; let him investigate the structure of the globe, or carry his views upward to those parts of the universe which the Almighty seems in some degree to have submitted to his notice and inspection : but let him be content to study *man*, as a moral and accountable being, in the *word* of God alone, who *made man* : let him be content to learn from thence, what only the *word* of God himself could ever have satisfactorily disclosed to us, the ways of *his* providence, and the perfections of *his* nature.

## NOTES TO SERMON VIII.

---

Page 448. note (1).

SO much has been said and written upon the subject of the *sufficiency* of human Reason to discover a rule of life, &c.] It seems to me to be a great abuse of terms, to talk of the *sufficiency* of human Reason to discover a rule of life, where we can intend no more than its *competency* to do so. That human Reason, by a long course of experience and observation, may attain to a just discrimination of right and wrong, and to the discovery of a proper rule of life, as far as precept goes, I shall not give myself the trouble to dispute; because it would prove nothing against the original necessity of a divine Revelation. When we talk of the *sufficiency* of human Reason for moral and religious purposes, we ought to be able to shew, that human Reason, besides being *competent* to such discoveries in time, was *originally sufficient* for these ends, both in point of time, and with a view to every occasion that might arise for the exercise and application of Reason. Those most disposed to question the history of the Bible, are yet very fond of going back to the origin of the species, and of tracing the progress of Reason from a state of complete ignorance, to one of ample refinement and information: in which, not content to tell us what *may* have been man's *first* thoughts, they uniformly insist upon telling us what they *must* have been: and if we will take their words for it, they appear to have been neither honourable to God, nor serviceable to man. Lord Bolingbroke, Mr. Hume, and Rousseau have all agreed, that Polytheism must have been man's first religion, Idolatry his first worship. But Reason must have been a bad minister or instructor, if she could not at the very first

first keep him from such gross errors. Diderot, indeed, in his *Système de la Nature*, has lately undertaken to prove, not only that polytheism must have been, in *the early ages of the world*, the natural result of men's observation of nature; but that it must be much more so now, that *the course and progress of philosophy has tended to remove men's prejudices*. This is to rob us even of the advantages Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Hume would promise us, from the *cultivation* of our Reason; the latter having assured us, that the true principles of Theism, or the belief of one almighty and wise Being, the Creator, the Preserver and Ruler of heaven and earth, results from the greatest improvements of the understanding in *philosophy* and *science*: and though the former pretends, that it requires "*cultivated talents*" to discover the unity and existence of God; yet he says, that to minds enlightened by *learning* and *philosophy*, this tenet flows so *naturally* from a consideration of God's works, that "it is plain enough, that the knowledge of the one true God would have been acquired by men, and would have been preserved in the world, if no such people as the Jews had ever been." But we see, that even in the 18th century of Christianity, this is not the necessary fruit of the application of Reason and "*cultivated talents*" to the study of nature; and therefore Lord Bolingbroke was very premature, at least, though he wrote in times of great refinement, in asserting so strongly as he does, that "the tables of natural law are hung up in the works of God, and are so obvious, that no man who is able to read the plainest characters can mistake them." And again, that "the wisdom, as well as power, that appears in the whole construction, order, and harmony of the universe, *must* have carried, at all times, the same general conviction into the breast of every man who observed, and reflected on his own observations."

As to the morals of a people, whose religion was of necessity polytheism, and worship, idolatry, I confess I am not solicitous to be informed what they were; because I am persuaded, that besides the great chance of their being very incorrect, if no revelation was given at first, and the Bible account is not authentic, we know nothing at all about the first beginning of things; and  
that

that the mere conjectures even of a Bolingbroke and Hume are of no more importance than the fancies and reveries of the most *plebeian philosophers* that ever existed. The *sufficiency* of Reason, however, is out of the question, certainly, if it was not sufficient at the very first to guide man to the truth, *omnipotent truth*; on which, according to Mr. Godwin, the whole order and harmony of the universe, moral and physical, is to depend. For Reason could never have been otherwise than the most distinguishing faculty of man's nature; and therefore, to suppose it not sufficient to preserve man from error at the first beginning of things, is, I think, to acknowledge it to be totally insufficient; and even worse, to be the very occasion of leading us astray. For, as Cicero has well observed, that as in physic it matters nothing whether a disease be such, as that no man *does*, or no man *can*, recover from it; so neither does it make any difference, whether by philosophy no man *is*, or no man *can* be, made wise or good:—"non *intelligo quid intersit, utrum nemo sit sapiens, an nemo esse possit.*" *De Nat. Deor. lib. iii.* So to pretend, that Reason is sufficient to discover all that man needs to know of religion and morality; and yet, that for ages and ages man was not in a condition to make such a use of his Reason, is absurd and preposterous. To talk of a remote and speculative, where a proximate and practical *sufficiency* is required, (to use the words of an excellent writer upon the very subject,) is no answer to the difficulty. "Could so wise, so righteous, and merciful a Being as God is, bring millions of creatures into life, with such a poor provision for their happiness, as that not one in ten thousand should be likely to obtain it? This is so near akin to an *absolute insufficiency*, that it cannot fail to bear hard on the *perfections of God.*" See a Tract on the *Strength and Weakness of Reason*, London, 1737, 2d edit.

To reject Revelation, and yet to regard Reason as a faculty, which was originally designed to depend on the gradual developement of truth, to so great a degree, as that neither the nature of God nor the nature of man should have been discoverable for many ages, is to rate the use of Reason and the importance of truth so low, as to make them of far less consideration than the

the gratification of the appetites, and the pursuit of objects, which we enjoy in common with the brute creation. But that Reason should have been abused in the course of ages, and truth obscured, and revealed knowledge abandoned and lost, is nothing wonderful in the history of man; and therefore, though I think it absurd to suppose, that man's intellectual powers were originally so weak, or so depraved, as to hurry him headlong into error; yet, that since the fall this has been the character of human Reason, and that from the very first it was *liable* to be depraved, I am far from denying.

All that we read of the polytheism and idolatry of the early ages of the world, I firmly believe to have been, jointly with the evil effects of a moral depravity, the fruits of erroneous reasoning upon the visible works of nature. But what right have Deists and Infidels to assume, that this was the *primitive* state of things? The Jewish records must be allowed to be of a certain age; and generally older, even upon the lowest computation, than any other existing records of antiquity. I have already, I think; remarked, that they speak of idolaters always as of those who had *gone astray*; who had *abandoned* a *primitive religion*, and an *original faith in one supreme God*; who had "*turned aside*," and "*become filthy, abominable, and corrupt*." And it is not ill observed by Bishop Warburton, though so contrary to the conclusions of Lord Bolingbroke, Mr. Hume, and others, that "idol worship has none of the appearances of an original custom; but has all the circumstances attending a depraved and corrupt institution." *Div. Leg.* vol. i. 461.

But, besides that the Bible thus speaks of a pure religion, which prevailed anterior to idolatry, that so pure a theology as that of the Jews should have prevailed in those early ages, and in the midst of idolatry, is a better proof of the real fact, than any that mere reasoning and conjecture can supply: for the authors of the Sacred Books have certainly never been regarded by Deists as persons of such refined and "cultivated talents," as to be naturally superior to their neighbours, much less to the sages and philosophers of Greece and Rome. Lord Bolingbroke expressly says, that "the notions of  
" the



“ the sacred Penmen were plainly those of an ignorant people, and unphilosophical ages.” Mr. Hume, that the Bible is the work of “ a barbarous and ignorant people, wrote in an age when they were still more barbarous :” [what this means I do not pretend to discern.] And yet, all the tenets of these “ ignorant and barbarous” writers seem to be *immediately directed* against the most glaring errors of idolatry. In the Jewish theology we have no deified *elements*, no *terrestrial*, *aërial*, or *aquatic* Gods. The God of the Hebrews is all in all. “ The *earth* is his, and all that therein is.”—“ It is the Lord that commandeth the *waters*; it is the glorious God that maketh the *thunder*. “ It is the Lord that ruleth the *sea*.”—“ He giveth *rain* upon the earth, and sendeth *waters* upon the fields.”—“ He visiteth the *earth*, and blesteth it; he maketh it very plenteous : he *watereth* her furrows, he sendeth *rain* into the valleys thereof : he maketh it soft with *drops* of rain, and blesteth the increase of it.” Secondly, the God of the Hebrews, as Creator, is with a most emphatic distinction set high above the most glorious works of his own hands, which are allowed to have been the first objects of Gentile superstition. Such are the heavenly bodies ; meteors ; elementary principles ; mountains, groves, and rivers ; birds, beasts, and reptiles ; kings, and heroes ; and above all, even the invisible spirits, which, under various denominations, were ever supposed to exist without the boundaries of this world. The cxlviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm alone would seem to be expressly directed against *all* such errors. “ O praise the Lord of heaven, praise him in the height. Praise him, all ye ANGELS of his ; praise him, all his HOST. “ Praise him, SUN and MOON ; praise him, all ye STARS and LIGHT. Praise him, all ye HEAVENS, and ye WATERS that are above the heavens. For HE spake the word, and they were MADE ; HE commanded, and they were CREATED. Praise the Lord upon earth, ye DRAGONS and all DEEPS : FIRE and HAIL, SNOW and VAPOURS, WIND and STORM, fulfilling his word ; MOUNTAINS and all HILLS ; fruitful TREES and all CEDARS ; BEASTS and all CATTLE ; WORMS and FEATHERED FOWLS ; KINGS of the EARTH, and all people ; princes, and all judges of

“the world.” Thirdly, that great and prevailing error, common in the *East* particularly, namely, the doctrine of two coeval and coequal principles of good and evil, light and darkness, is in the Jewish records peculiarly set aside; “I am the Lord, there is none else; there is no God beside me. I form the LIGHT, and create DARKNESS; I make PEACE, and create EVIL.” *Isaiah* xlv. To which Bishop Lowth adds, and surely with reason, ver. 19. “I have not spoken in SECRET, in the DARK PLACE of the earth;” not like the ancient oracles, such as the Cumæan Sybil, *Virg. Æn.* vi. 42. and the oracle at Delphi. See *Strabo* and *Diod. Sic.* And again, in opposition to the equivocal and false answers of the heathen oracles, “I am Jehovah, who speak TRUTH, who give DIRECT ANSWERS.”

In all these passages it is surely not too much to say, that there is a marked opposition to the most gross errors of Paganism, very striking and particular. In regard to the SUN and FIRE alone, (if not the same object of worship,) this tends to exclude perhaps the *Osiris* of the Egyptians; the *Mithras* of the Persians; the *Jupiter* and *Apollo* of Greece; the *Serapis* of Egypt; the *Ormuz* and *Oromazes* of Persia; the *Vesta* and *Vulcan* of Rome. The records themselves, from which we extract these passages, declare, that the Creator revealed himself at first to Adam, the parent of the human kind; and afterwards to Abraham, particularly called forth from a nation of idolaters. In either case, whether to guard man at first from the delusions of error, or afterwards to withdraw him from the abominations of idolatry, the interposition of the Creator was surely not without reason, and particularly consistent with his brightest attributes of goodness and beneficence. Lord Bolingbroke, I know, acknowledges that the unity of God was known and believed in the world previous to the vocation of Abraham; but not by any means by way of corroborating the Scripture account of a primitive Revelation to Adam; but, on the contrary, expressly to prove, that it was *not* a tenet peculiar to the Israelites. And though in the following passage he would seem to allow the necessity of a Revelation; “For,” says his Lordship, “without Revelation the unity of  
“God

“ God could not be the primitive faith of any one people, till observation and meditation, till a full and vigorous exercise of reason, made it such. By considering the phenomena separately, men could not arrive at a knowledge of the one Supreme Being; and such men as we speak of (the race of Adam, &c.) were not capable of taking a comprehensive view of the harmony of the whole.” *Phil. Works*, Essay ii. Yet, in another place, he takes care to tell us, that “ we have nothing to do with the antediluvian world.” This is an easy way of setting aside the testimony of the Scriptures certainly, but a very clumsy way of proving them false: for they speak not of the doctrine of the Unity as the discovery of observation and meditation, but of direct and immediate revelation: and what right can Lord Bolingbroke or any Deist have to say, that it did not originate as Moses has related?

The dull minds of the Jews, which they advert to so often, can only serve to increase our surprise at the correct theology of their sacred records. The learned Dr. Campbell reminds Mr. Hume of an assertion he has made in his works, “ that if a traveller were transported into any unknown region, and found the inhabitants ignorant and barbarous, he might beforehand declare them idolaters; and there is scarce a possibility of their being mistaken.” “ I know,” says Dr. Campbell, “ no satisfactory account that can be given of the exception of the Jews, on the principles of the Essayist. Nevertheless, nothing is more easy, than to give a satisfactory account of it, on the Christian principles. This account is that which is given in the Bible itself. It is, that the religious tenets of that nation were not the result of their reasonings, but proceeded from divine Revelation. The contrast we discern between the Israelites and the ancient Greeks and Romans is remarkable: the Greeks and Romans, on all the subjects of human erudition, on all the liberal and the useful arts, reasoned like *men*; on the subject of religion, they prated like *children*. The Israelites, on the contrary, in all the sciences and arts, were *children*; but in their notions of religion they were *men*: in the doctrines, for example, of the unity, the eternity, the omnipotence,

“ the omniscience, the omnipresence, the wisdom, and  
 “ the goodness of God ; in their opinions concerning  
 “ providence, and the creation, preservation, and go-  
 “ vernment of the world ; opinions so exalted and  
 “ comprehensive, as even by Mr. Hume’s own acknow-  
 “ ledgment could never enter into the thoughts of  
 “ Barbarians.” *Campbell on Miracles*, sect. vii.

I have dwelt the longer on this, because if there is any point in dispute between infidels and believers, in which the former appear to have turned their own weapons against themselves, it is, I think, this particular one, of the sufficiency of human Reason. They first object to the utility of Revelation, because of the *sufficiency* of human Reason to discover, not only a rule of life, but the nature of God, and the methods of his providence ; and yet, by their *own* account, so insufficient does it appear to have been, in the first ages of the world, that for many generations error *must* have taken place of truth ; and for no other reason, but because in those first ages of the world, while ignorance and barbarism prevailed, men *could not* discover the *true nature* of God, or the ways of his providence. They will not admit, that God did reveal himself to man at the origin of things, because polytheism and idolatry appear to them to have been the first religion and worship of mankind ; and because, as mankind were at first uniformly ignorant and barbarous, it could not have been otherwise ; nothing but a divine revelation being sufficient to discover to them the most important truths of religion, the unity of God in particular. Thus the *sufficiency* of Reason is held to be proved, by a *positive acknowledgment* of its *insufficiency* ; and the inutility of Revelation demonstrated, by a *clear confession* of its *absolute necessity*. Besides which, polytheism and idolatry are assumed to be the primitive religion of the world, in positive contradiction to the oldest history of the world extant ; and those very religious truths, which they declare to have been not discoverable by an ignorant and barbarous people, nor otherwise than by express Revelation, the unity of God particularly, are found in the books of a nation particularly stigmatized by Infidels themselves for their ignorance and barbarism, and referred by the authors of those books, not

to their own discoveries, but to an *express revelation* of God.

If any persons would wish to satisfy themselves of the indispensable necessity of a divine Revelation in the first ages of the world, upon the Infidel's own view of things, I would refer them at once to *Mr. Hume's Natural History of Religion*. This treatise never fails to make the same impression upon my mind; an impression as contrary as possible, in all likelihood, to the author's intentions: and as I do not like to be deceived by such impressions, I have been made happy, by finding that it has appeared exactly in the same light to writers of distinguished eminence. Dr. MacLaine in particular, in his *Letters to Mr. Soame Jenyns*, expressly remarks, "that perhaps *no book is more adapted to shew the unspeakable advantages of a divine Revelation.*" P. 220. As for the sufficiency of human Reason, where polytheism and idolatry have prevailed, Infidels themselves have given it up, as has already been shewn; and they could not surely have done otherwise. See the absurdities of polytheism well exposed by the Apologetical Fathers of the Church, particularly *Arnobius* and *Lactantius*.

The absurdities of *idolatry*, besides the many admirable descriptions of them to be found in different parts of the holy Scriptures, cannot be more fully displayed, than in the Epistle ascribed to the prophet Jeremiah, at the end of the book of Baruch. As to the extravagances of Paganism, that is, of natural religion, see *Bishop Gibson's Second Pastoral Letter*; and the 2d part of *Dr. Nichols's Conference with a Theist*. Indeed they have been so often exposed, and with so much effect, that it is not at all necessary to dwell upon the subject. Two things only I would observe, namely, that if Reason was not sufficient to instruct Pagans in the higher truths of religion in the infancy of the world, it ought at least to have been sufficient to have preserved them from such gross errors, if the book of nature had been so generally legible as Infidels pretend; and secondly, that if the light of nature was so sufficient as others insist, the errors of the Gentile world can be only attributed to their great perverseness; and their numberless abominations will be less excusable by far than the Bi<sup>s</sup>

ble (which is often accused of great uncharitableness in this particular) would represent them to be. For though it is true, that it appears to have been, according to the Bible, God's peculiar care, by his prophets and ministers, often to set before the wicked the errors of their ways, that they might be converted and live; yet, what the Scriptures represent to have been done only on special occasions, Deists would pretend to be always the case: and where the Scriptures allow for man's weaknesses, and provide a special remedy for his lapse, Deists often insist upon the *irresistible* light of Nature; and in so doing leave no plea for the transgressor. The Scripture makes allowance for those who have had no means of "knowing their Master's will;" and have assured us, that *they* "shall be beaten with few stripes." But many Deists insist, that all have the means of fully knowing their Master's will; and therefore leave no room for such a mitigation of punishment. See this admirably argued by Dr. Leland, in many parts of his *Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation*.

In regard then to *morals*: if, as Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Hume have supposed, the human race must have set out with erroneous notions as to religion, Reason in its rude and uncultivated state being not only by their accounts insufficient to instruct them in the more sublime truths of religion; but insufficient besides to *secure them from the grossest errors and absurdities of superstition and idolatry*; it would be unreasonable to suppose they could have been much better off in regard to moral instruction and information. Lord Bolingbroke acknowledges, that "experience and observation," which according to him would appear to have been their only means of instruction, "require time; and Reason, that "collects from them, and is improved by them, comes "slowly to our assistance." I believe a greater truth could not be advanced; Rousseau particularly insists upon it; "L'une des acquisitions de l'homme, et même "des *plus lentes*, est la Raison." But if nature is at all uniform, and man the same now as at first, (and if he is not, how can Deists pretend to argue the matter? for it is only the book of God that tells us otherwise,) I see not how it was possible, consistently with the goodness we generally ascribe to the Supreme Being, that man should

should be left to wait the issue of this *slow* examination of nature, aided only by such a *cautious* and *dilatory* auxiliary as Reason, by their own acknowledgment, must ever have been. If all things now possible were possible at first, (and what have Deists who disown Revelation to allege to the contrary?) surely moral ills of the blackest malignity might have prevailed, before Reason and experience could have fortified man against temptations, even perhaps to the extinction of the species. Lord Bolingbroke thinks this was provided against by the very principle I should myself have fixed on, as the most likely to seduce man into error. Admitting that Reason would come too slowly to man's assistance, he adds, "but then, God implanted in all men the principle of *self-love*; and this prompting him continually to seek *his own happiness*, secures his conformity to the laws of nature." A stranger principle surely could not have been fixed on to secure man's virtue; for certainly nothing so *commonly* tends to inflame the passions and bewilder the reason, as this very principle of self-love: [see *Pope's Essay on Man*, Epist. iii. 269.] which Lord Bolingbroke in another place seems (as much as his friend Mr. Pope) to be aware of; for he says, that "while the passions are for ever *active*, and easily excited by every object of *apparent* good, Reason all the time is a *sluggard*, which cannot be so excited, but must be *willed* into action: and as this can rarely happen when the will is already determined by affections and passions, so when it does happen, a sort of composition takes place; and if affections and passions cannot govern absolutely, nor subject Reason to serve as their instrument, they *require* and *obtain* more indulgence from her than they deserve, or than she would shew them, if she was entirely free from their force, and from their seduction." Now surely a principle, which particularly sets in motion those passions and affections, which are always struggling to get the better of Reason, and restrain and circumscribe her power, even where they cannot subdue her, is a strange substitute for Reason herself. And I believe we have in the book of Genesis the most rational account that could be given of the first operations of this active principle, and

of its fatal triumph over Reason ; a victory, from which Reason never has recovered. From that time to this, self-love, with her numberless passions and desires, has been warring against the soul, and against Reason too. And if we take a view of Infidel philosophy at this very time, I think it will appear, that even “ *the remote and speculative*” sufficiency of Reason is as questionable as the “ *proximate and practical*.”

Some of the Pagan philosophers of *ancient* times had certainly, by *their speculative sufficiency of Reason*, attained to some of the most sublime precepts of the Gospel-morality. Even in regard to the regulation of the heart and thoughts of man :

“ Nam scelus inter se tacitum qui cogitat ullum,”

says Juvenal,

“ Facti crimen habet.” Sat. xiii. 209.

*Democritus* also in *Sententiis* ; “ Ἀγαθὸν οὐ τὸ μὴ ἀδικεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μηδὲν ΘΘΕΑΕΙΝ.” And again, “ Δόκιμος ἀνὴρ καὶ ἀδόκιμος ἐκ ἐξ ὧν πράσσει μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ὧν ΒΟΤΑΕΤΑΙ.” It is true these maxims could not have the authority of a revealed law, because of the doubts they were under in regard to the Being who was to take cognizance of the “ *tacitum scelus* ;” but the maxim itself is certainly sound and good. Nevertheless the Pagan philosophers of *modern* times have shewn a disposition to dismiss it from their codes ; and M. Volney in particular has asserted it to be a “ *law of Nature*,” that there is “ no crime or merit in *intention*.” And, for the credit of modern philosophy, I cannot forbear to add his speculative proof of this negation. “ For,” says he, “ it is only an idea, without reality.” See the fourth chapter of his *Law of Nature* ; which an *English* editor is pleased to call “ the Catechism of Good Sense and Good People.” What would Juvenal have given to have lived in *such* an age of Reason ! or Cicero ; for *Cicero’s* good sense was not of *this* stamp : Nature and Reason both taught *him* a different lesson. “ Quam similitudinem,” says he, speaking of the beauty and symmetry of objects of sense, “ NATURA, RATIOQUE, ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in CONSILIIS factisque conservandum putat : cavetque ne quid indecore  
“ effe-



“effoeminateve faciat : tum in omnibus et OPINIONIBUS et factis, ne quid *libidinosè* aut faciat aut COGITET.” *De Offic.* lib. i. c. 4. But Mr. Hume, following the opinion of a French philosopher, assures the world, that “if we would obtain all the advantages of life, *adultery* must be practised : that female *infidelity*, when known, is a small thing ; when unknown, no-thing.” Such is the progress the age has made in *Ethics* : such the *speculative sufficiency* of Reason in these days to discover a *rule of life* : such the superiority of our modern philosophy to that of the times of Cicero and Juvenal. And it should be noticed, that this is an AGE of HONOUR as well as REASON ; so that where there has been found a sufficiency of *Reason* to countenance *adultery*, there has been found an equal sufficiency of *Honour* to excuse *infidelity*. But it would be endless to pursue this comparison further ; nor do I think it at all necessary. Whoever wishes to have a correct view of “the immorality and absurdity of Deism,” and of “the nature and danger of Infidel philosophy,” may without much expence gratify their wishes, and acquire much valuable information, from two modern publications upon the subject, both I think *transatlantic* : the one by Mr. Fuller, entitled *The Gospel its own Witness* ; the 2d edit. published in 1800 : the other, *Two Discourses* addressed to the candidates for the *Baccalaureate* in Yale College, 1797, by Dr. Dwight, President of the College. This work has seen three editions, and well deserves it.

Page 456, note (2).

*I only require every man to determine for himself, from the dictates of his own heart, and his own feelings, whether it is at all probable, or even possible, that any principle of universal obligation, and unquestionable authority, can be discovered and put in force by mere human Reason.* Long ago Lactantius decided this question by an argument, that I think can never be refuted. Speaking expressly of the Pagan systems of philosophy, compared with Christianity, he says, “Quid ergo ? Nihilne illi simile præcipiunt ? Immo permulta : et ad verum frequenter accedunt : sed nihil ponderis habent illa præcepta, quia sunt humana ; et auctoritate majori,  
“id

“id est divina illa carent. Nemo igitur credit; quia  
 “tam se hominem putat esse qui audit, quam est ille  
 “qui præcipit.” *Institut.* lib. iii. 27. Nothing more  
 true could be said upon the subject, as far as regards  
 human laws and systems of philosophy; and his illus-  
 trations of the point are very good. Neither legislator  
 nor philosopher can ever reach the *heart*. The edict of  
 the legislator, and the precept of the philosopher, must  
 equally depend, for their effect, on circumstances totally  
 out of the reach of either. No power of man can re-  
 strain an *Atheist* from a *secret sin*. But it is said, what  
 men cannot do to restrain their fellow men, nature *can*.  
 The moral sense, the love of virtue for its own sake,  
 the fear of disgrace, the visible order and harmony of  
 the universe, are capable, we are told, of enforcing the  
 laws of morality, though it should be granted, that  
 there is no God: “etiam si daremus, non esse Deum,  
 “aut non curari ab eo negotia humana.” This might  
 do for such moralists as *Machiavel*, *Hobbes*, *Toland*, and  
*Bayle*: but we should scarce have expected to find it in  
*Grotius*; from whose writings, however, we have ex-  
 tracted the passage just cited. See the Prolegomena to  
 his work *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, §. 11. It is a doctrine  
 not defensible in philosophy, and can never therefore  
 be advanced by Deists, but to weaken the authority of  
 divine Revelation.

It is an absurdity to suppose an *Atheist* would be re-  
 strained by any speculative notion, however he might  
 be disposed to submit in common life to the standing  
 laws of society: and I think we are obliged to M.  
*Bayle* for supplying us with an argument against him-  
 self, when he tells us what his own security would be  
 against the evil machinations of an *Atheist*. He would  
 rely on the *Atheist* doing him no secret injury, through  
 fear of discovering the secret in his sleep, or in the de-  
 lirium of a fever. Against trusting to *such* a security,  
 men need not, I think, be much cautioned. But indeed  
*Bishop Warburton* has shewn it to be a principle just as  
 likely to act in an *opposite manner* upon the mind of an  
*Atheist*: for, says he, very properly, this might just as  
 well prevent the *Atheist* from acting *virtuously*, even in  
 public, and the sight of men, lest in his sleep he should  
 tell the truth, and let all the world know, that he acted  
 only

only from a selfish vanity, and a desire to be thought better than he really was. Surely *this* contingency might alarm him as much as the other, if a regard to *reputation* is to be held sufficient to *restrain* him from acts of immorality: for he must be supposed to have an equal dread of rendering himself in any other way contemptible and ridiculous, which certainly such an accident could not fail to be the occasion of. But in getting rid of the utility of Revelation, the Deist insists upon the law of *nature* being the law of *God*, and therefore obligatory enough to be binding on all Theists at least, who may reasonably be thought to compose the majority of mankind. But if this be true, so far from proving the inutility of a particular Revelation, it supplies us, I think, with two very strong reasons for the peculiar *necessity* of a divine Revelation: for what is the law of nature, which our *passions* and *appetites* often point to? Is it a law so precise and determinate, that no one Theist can interpret it differently from another? Are the licentious and the temperate equally obedient to the law of nature? Are the libertine and voluptuary, in the gratification of their *natural appetites*, to be allowed to think they are fulfilling the laws of God as truly as the chaste and sober? Is the law of nature, as a law of God, so accommodating to men's fancies, that to some adultery shall appear no crime, assassination no injury, revenge honourable, suicide glorious, abortion and infanticide politically just? All these have been considered by some *professed* Theists to be, under certain circumstances, no less than the *law of nature*, and consequently the law of God; so contrary, I will venture to say, to the decided opinions of Theists in general, that the latter would never be brought to allow, that the volume of nature could possibly admit of any such interpretation. It is enough to know however that some, who have not only been held to be in their sober senses, but who have been numbered among the *philosophers* of the age, have *so read* the volume of nature. Could Theists ever be so divided about the interpretation of the sixth, seventh, eighth, and tenth Commandments? Could any written law be liable to an abuse like this? Yet to such abuse the law of nature ever is and ever has been liable.

M. Volney

M. Volney himself acknowledges, that the great mass of mankind (for so I think *the ignorant*, whom he speaks of, comparatively are, and always will be) “are liable every instant to commit mistakes, the most pernicious to themselves or others.”—“Above 3000 years since,” says he, “the wisest of men observed, that the number of fools is infinite; and the world has not changed.” And when he is asked, how it happens that *philosophers* deceive themselves, his answer is, “From their nature as men.” And yet, if God has given us no other law but the law of nature, we have no interpreters of that law but men; who by a distinct law of nature, it seems, are for ever liable to be deceived: for this is M. Volney’s own assertion, which he repeats in another place: “Man is ignorant by nature; and ignorance is an obstacle in the way of all her laws.”—“Are ignorance and folly *common*?” is another question of his celebrated Catechism. The answer is, “Yes, very common; they are the habitual and general diseases of mankind.” This is the opinion of one who thinks the law of nature the only law of God; while, by his own confession, the number of those who are amenable to it, and yet incapable of learning their duty from it, is now, and ever has been, infinite! Surely, since all professed Deists are so inclined to look to the law of nature as the only measure of their duty, it should have occurred to them, that a good and gracious God could not but be sensible of the imperfection of a law, which the ignorant cannot comprehend, and the wise may so continually mistake.

But if Deists are sincere in their belief of the superintendence of an omniscient and gracious Providence, they must surely be brought to see the great improbability also of man’s being left to depend entirely on a law, that should leave no difference between the Theist and the Atheist. When the Atheist once knows, that the law of nature is regarded as the only law of God, there is not an action of his life, in which he may not insult his God, and make a mockery of man. Every compliance with the law of nature will gain him the credit of being a faithful and obedient servant of the most High; and then not even the sanctity of an oath will secure the Theist from his deceptions. “Frustra quippe

“quippe jurando quis adigitur per Deum, quem non credit, adeoque nec *metuit*,” says Puffendorf; and Hobbes admits it in his work *De Cive*, c. ii. §. 21. And if we may take an Atheist’s own word for the trust we ought to repose in a person who has nothing to *fear*, Diderot himself assures us, that “Tout homme qui n’a rien à craindre, devient bientôt méchant.” Certainly, however, in regard to oaths and imprecations, in the case of an Atheist, the great God of heaven may be invoked to confirm any testimony, and his holy name profaned to sanction any hypocritical pretence. And this, I think, may serve to prove not only the expediency of a written law, to which the Atheist shall be obliged to conform as well as the Theist, but the necessity also of some *arbitrary* laws, an habitual conformity to which may increase the security of the Theist. For though there may be no means entirely of guarding against hypocrisy in an Atheist; yet the more frequent occasions there may be provided, for men to testify their belief in God, and in the immutable sanctions of his righteous laws, the more security must necessarily arise to society in general. Any man may profess to believe in God, to compass some particular end: but the Atheist’s pretence of belief might be timely suspected, if he was known to have passed his life in an habitual contempt of God’s sabbath, and other holy institutions. I would not say any thing to render man more suspicious than necessary of his neighbour: but our habitual *trust* and *confidence* in God can never, I think, be rendered certain to man, but by an open and uninterrupted course of rational *devotion*. For while the Atheist may have many motives to be virtuous without religion, it must cost him great pains, even to pretend to be religious without virtue: that “service” to God, which, having the consent of the heart and soul, is to the true Christian “perfect freedom,” would to the Atheist be the hardest and most hateful bondage, a burthen most intolerable. I confess, without external devotion, and even instituted forms of devotion, I know no means of distinguishing between a Theist and an Atheist: I would not confound them without necessity; but it is incumbent on the Deist to teach us how to distinguish them. Even Polybius could

could acknowledge the beneficial effects of religious institutions, to support the sanctity of oaths; which, he says, were more binding upon the Romans, who publicly worshipped the Gods, and believed the doctrine of future punishments, than ten written sureties among the Greeks, with as many seals, and twice as many witnesses: ἀντιγραφεῖς δέκα, καὶ σφραγίδας ποσάυτας καὶ μάρτυρας διπλασίους. Ἰσορ. Α. 5'. edit. Basil. 192.

As to the superiority of sanctions and motives, in the case of a revealed religion and a written law, it cannot possibly be questioned. Natural religion is grossly deficient both in regard to sanctions and to motives; to sanctions, because no observation of nature, no contemplation of the visible scene of things, can possibly assure us of a future state, that is, of rewards or punishment to come; in regard to motives, because while revealed religion calls upon every man alike to "fear God" and keep his commandments," natural religion directs every man to do only what seemeth good in his *own* eyes: see Spinoza, as cited by Dr. Leland in his *View of Deistical Writers*, Letter VI. vol. i. p. 85. 5th edit. Natural religion is undoubtedly a religion man makes for himself: "L'homme n'a qu'à consulter *les désirs de son cœur*, pour savoir ce qu'il se doit à lui-même, et ce qu'il doit aux autres;" says Diderot. He even goes so far as to assure us, "dès que le vice nous rend heureux, il doit aimer le vice:" which, though not intended to encourage vice, is a dangerous maxim in the present state of things. "Ce que Dieu veut," says Rousseau, "qu'un homme fasse, il ne le lui fait pas dire par un autre homme; il le lui dit lui-même, il l'écrit au *fond de son cœur*." I have only to consult myself," he adds, "concerning what I ought to do. All that I *feel* to be right is right. Whatever I *feel* to be wrong is wrong. All the morality of our actions lies in the judgment we ourselves form of them." *Emile*. "It were to be wished," says Mr. Godwin, "that no human being were obliged to do any thing but from the dictates of his own understanding." And again, "the most natural and obvious of all proceedings, is for each man to be the sovereign arbiter of his own concerns." And a good deal to the same purpose in another place: "If I learn nothing but  
" what

“ what I desire to learn, what should hinder me from “ being my own preceptor ? ” Certainly nothing. Any dunce at school might answer this enquiry, I think ; and any master of a school must see the wisdom of it. And yet I know not but this is a just description of the principle upon which every Deist embraces his natural religion in preference to Revelation. Each wishes to be his own preceptor ; that is, according to Mr. Godwin’s definition, “ to learn nothing but what he himself desires to learn.” Such persons may well be expected not to see, nor to acknowledge, the utility of a divine Revelation. As they will be their own instructors, no doubt they will also choose to be their own judges ; and as they insist upon being a law unto themselves, we may be assured that self-gratification will be their chiefest motive, and the approbation of their own judgment their highest sanction. Compare the sanctions and motives of Christianity, as they are brought together in *Bishop Gibson’s second Pastoral Letter* ; see also *Ogden’s XIVth Sermon on the Superiority of the Christian Religion over all other Religions* ; and *Paley’s Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, b. ii. ch. 4. where he speaks of Mr. Hume’s 4th Appendix to his principles of morals.

By what has been said, I am far from meaning to deny that there is a law of nature to which we are responsible ; that there are natural sanctions provided by God to enforce this law ; and that it was designed to lead us to every thing just and right. “ What makes “ then the evil, dangerous, and desperate doctrines of “ natural religion ? ” Bishop Taylor, who puts this question, shall give the answer : “ Not the obscurity of the “ thing, but the cloud upon the heart : for say what “ you will, he that hears must be the *expounder* ; and “ we can never suppose but a man will give sentence in “ behalf of what he passionately loves.” Men have differed so much in their *interpretations* of the law of nature, that there is now scarcely an immorality to be named, which the Deist may not find some *various reading* of the *volume* of nature, to justify ; some *accommodating gloss*, to support him in it. I have already mentioned some gross violations of the law of nature, which philosophers of modern times have found

means

means to vindicate; as adultery, affaffination, suicide, abortion. Mr. Godwin (who positively declares not only that Alexander and Cæsar, but that Milton's Satan may be called *virtuous*, for relenting the unjust inequality between him and God) thinks *robbers* generally act upon a persuasion in their own minds, that the property they covet is comparatively of small value in the hands of the present possessor, and that great advantage would accrue from its being in their hands; and therefore "*the transfer ought to be made,*" and they "*do what they think right*" in bringing this about. *Pol. Just.* vol. i. 99. 4th edit.

Such is the morality to be deduced from the book of nature, when left to man's own interpretation. The eighth and tenth Commandments of the Decalogue are surely more explicit: of the *expediency* of the latter I leave all men now to judge from the account just given of the grievous mistakes we may be liable to, in framing for ourselves a system of duty and moral action independent of Revelation; and I return with confidence to the appeal I have made in my Discourse, "to every man's own feelings, to decide upon the necessity of a divine Revelation, in addition to the light of nature, with a view to his own happiness and security, as arising out of the confidence he would wish to repose in his neighbours and associates." "Will you dare to assert," says M. Linguet, in his critical analysis of Voltaire's works, "that it is in philosophic families we are to look for models of filial respect, conjugal love, sincerity in friendship, or fidelity among domestics?" Linguet was an admirer of Voltaire, but disapproved of his opposition to Christianity. This is noticed in *Mr. Fuller's Gospel its own Witness*; to which I must again refer for proofs of the immorality of modern Deism: they are too numerous to transcribe; and I cannot pretend to place them in a stronger light, than Mr. Fuller himself has done.

Page 466. note (3).

*It cannot surely with any fairness be alleged after this, that Bishop Taylor regarded Christianity as "nothing more than a rule of life."]* I have only selected a few passages from Bishop Taylor, to shew, that however  
he



he may have appeared to Mr. Fellowes, from some detached expressions, to have regarded Christianity as "only a rule of life," he was certainly by no means unmindful of the doctrinal parts of Christianity, and particularly of the atonement by the blood of Christ. The passages that might be adduced from Dr. Clarke, whom Mr. Fellowes also cites, are innumerable: and from Dr. Cave's works (as many of them, as I have by me to refer to) I could, if it was necessary, produce enough, in a short space of time, to satisfy any reasonable mind. But I must confess, that Mr. Fellowes's opinion of Christianity in this instance seems to me so little consonant to the tenor of the New Testament, that had Bishop Taylor, Dr. Clarke, and Dr. Cave, been unexceptionable witnesses in his favour, it would have had no weight with me. If Christianity is "nothing more than a rule of life," then not only, as St. Paul saith, is "our preaching vain," but certainly Christ hath died in vain.

I am not acquainted with all Mr. Fellowes's works; and indeed I have not yet had any opportunity of reading the particular publication to which Dr. Parr alludes in his note: therefore I cannot pretend to judge of any opinions of Mr. Fellowes, but such as are stated in the treatise I have particularly cited; "*Religion without Cant.*" It is in this publication I find the proposition so strongly insisted on, that "Christianity is no more than a rule of life." But this is also accompanied with many assertions that must be held to imply, that some very important tenets of the Church of England are not Gospel truths. I must declare, though I am sorry to do it, that not even the eloquence of Dr. Parr could persuade me that it is very correct morality to continue in open and professed communion with a Church, whose tenets we think it necessary to disavow. This indeed is enough to fix upon the Church the charge which Soeinians are so forward to advance, (but which I had hoped was not true), namely, that many members of the Church are not sincere in their professions, and would quit it, if they had a fair opportunity. Mr. Fellowes has reason indeed to be gratified with Dr. Parr's eulogium, because it is the testimony of a neighbour; and be-

sides its eloquence, it is such a history of his character, as none but a neighbour could supply. May he long live to exercise the charity for which he is so warmly commended ! Nor would I wish to restrain his pen ; which has written much that I admire, and much that I could commend. But indeed he would do well to be more consistent ; for though he wishes Christianity to be even preached and promulgated as “ *no more than a rule of life,*” yet he does not scruple to speak of “ the mercy of God,” as “ operating through the *atonement* of Christ.” Is such a doctrine as this then to be suppressed, and the ransom which Christ paid for our sins to be never mentioned, because it may chance to be objectionable to the Jew and Turk, Infidel and Heretic ? John the Baptist did not take this method of turning men to repentance. When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, he told them he had a *new* doctrine to deliver to them, not in any manner accommodated to their prejudices, but in direct opposition to them. When St. Paul had to do with the Stoics and Epicureans at Athens, he little heeded the scorn and derision with which they treated his new Gods, Jesus and Ananias, (see *Cave's Life of Paul*,) but continued to preach “ *Christ crucified, and the resurrection of the dead :*” nor did he fail of making converts ; among whom was Dionysius the learned Areopagite.—This mode of *suppressing* the great doctrines of Christianity is, in my humble opinion, entirely incompatible with the engagements of a Minister of the Church of England. I am as much an enemy to the doctrine of Faith without works, as Mr. Fellowes can be : but I am very certain, that the doctrine of works without Faith is not the doctrine of the Church of England ; nor yet indeed of the Church of Christ. “ The form of sound words,” originally delivered to the saints, was to be preached and promulgated whole and entire, and not “ accommodated by a bold retrenchment of mysteries to the blindness and the pride of human reason.”

It is unpleasant to me to dwell so long on this subject ; but if ever there was a time, when the Church required to be protected from the intrusion of secret enemies, and the reproach of false friends, it is the present ; when the Unitarian party and other Dissenters are continually insinuating,

insinuating, that there are many among us, whose Faith belies the language of their lips. Many such charges occur in the writings of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey. Mr. Lindsey has certainly taken the only step to be taken upon such occasions, to secede from a society whose tenets and principles he did not approve. Mr. Lindsey however, who has himself had the consistency to secede, has particularly *praised* and *commended* a mode of conduct in two of his friends, which appears to me to be without a ground of excuse. The cases I allude to are those of Dr. Chambers of Achurch in Northamptonshire, and Mr. Evanson of Tewkesbury. These gentlemen, it seems, disapproved of many of the professed doctrines of the Church of England : but having preferment which they did not choose to relinquish without *compulsion*, they took upon them, in the performance of the public service, (which they were bound by a voluntary engagement to adhere to,) to omit every part of the Liturgy which they did not approve; a conduct which appears to me dishonest both in the sight of God and man. Yet Mr. Lindsey calls it a “ noble effort ;” and commends it as an act of manly spirit, and courageous honesty : which is the more remarkable, because in his own case he had set an example, by secession and resignation of his preferment, of the only proper conduct to adopt on such an occasion : and in only a few pages further, where he takes occasion to notice the secession of Mr. Maty, he introduces a letter from that able scholar and well-intentioned man, in which the case is put in the strongest light. “ Finally, I can neither submit to acquiesce in silence, after having made my objections known, nor take upon me to alter the service of the Church, as long as I continue to profess myself a minister of it.”

But to return from this digression. I cannot wish to drive any person so learned and ingenious, and of so good a moral character as Mr. Fellowes is represented to be, out of the Church, and more particularly from the service of the Church, if I could keep him in it. As therefore he professes to have *morality* so much at heart, I would beseech him duly to consider, how much the morality of a Christian must be, and is generally acknowledged to be, connected with the *doctrinal* tenets of the Gospel :

in proof of which that I may refer to authority the least exceptionable possible, I shall chiefly have recourse to Dr. Samuel Clarke, whom Mr. Fellowes, as I have observed in my Discourse, cites for the very purpose of proving that Christianity is "no more than a rule of life." Now Dr. Clarke has particularly drawn out for us the following *scale* of moral perfections. "From what has been said, we may observe; that *moral virtues*, and what the Scripture calls the *fruits of the Spirit*, are *one and the same thing* under different denominations: when considered in *themselves*, in their own *absolute and intrinsic nature*, as being *dispositions* of mind essentially and unalterably *good*, they are styled VIRTUES: when considered with regard to their *effects*, in the visible *actions* and *practice* of men, they are called MORALITY. When considered with respect to the *root and spring*, the *fountain* or *principle* from which they flow; namely, a right *sense* of the *reason* and *truth* of things, and a just regard to God the Judge of all; they are then styled RELIGION. Lastly, when considered with respect to the *extraordinary* supports they receive from the revelation of the *Gospel* in particular, as being therein explained with *clearer* and more *distinct* declarations, enforced with stronger and more powerful motives, encouraged and promoted with all the *helps* and *assurances* of the *Spirit of God*; in *this* respect, they are called the FRUITS of the SPIRIT." *Sermons*, vol. iii. Sermon IX. Surely from this we learn, that the morality of the Gospel is not mere morality; but morality recommended by the promise of *extraordinary helps* and *assurances*; enforced with stronger and more powerful motives than any other system of morality whatsoever. And what motive can be stronger than the knowledge and assurance of God's *hatred* of *sin*? And how can this be made so conspicuous and clear to us, as by a due reflection on the *death* of Christ? the very object of which, according to Dr. Clarke himself, was, to *discourage sin*. "To punish sinners," saith he, "and destroy wickedness out of his kingdom, is indeed the necessary office even of that Governor who is goodness itself; and therefore, in order to *discourage sin*, he thought fit it should be pardoned by no easier method

“thod than by the *incarnation and death of his Son.*”  
 Serm. IX. vol. ii. And again, (which will particularly, I think, serve to shew how much it was this learned Divine’s opinion that the *doctrines* of Scripture should be made the foundation of Christian morality,) “The Gospel,” says he, “shews us, that God is a being of purer eyes than to behold iniquity: so far *bating* wickedness, as that he *did not think fit to pardon sin, without so great a testimony against it as the death of his Son*; and yet, at the same time, of such essential mercy and goodness, that he would rather *give his own Son a ransom for sinners*, than not find a method of *pardon- ing them, consistent with the wisdom of his infinite and eternal government.* By giving us consequently the example of Christ in his life, and in his *sufferings*; the *assurances* of his *Spirit*; the assurance of a reward for virtue, in a happy immortality; and a more express declaration of his *wrath from heaven, against all un- righteousness and ungodliness* of men: by *these means* does the Gospel, in the *most effectual manner*, ‘teach us, that, *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*’ And to them, who are thus taught by it, “and to them ONLY, it is, ‘*the grace of God which bringeth salvation.*” Serm. XII. vol. ii. Thus, according to Dr. Clarke, (Mr. Fellowes’s own authority,) and thus *only*, is Christianity to be considered as “*a rule of life* :” not by suppression of its singular and important doctrines of atonement for sin, the corruption of man, the wrath of God against all evil doers, and the gracious assurances of the holy Spirit, but by the *particular aid and addition* of all these “*extraordinary supports* ;” which raises it far above all other systems of “*morality* ;” all other “*religions*” of the world; all other “*rules of life* ;” all other means of “*salvation* !”

Page 470. note (4).

*But as these misrepresentations of Christianity have been repeatedly noticed and admirably exposed by various writers, I need not take up more of your time with them at present.]* I confess my own mind is so satisfied with the unanswerable arguments that have been adduced, by many eminent writers, in vindication of the Gospel from

these misrepresentations of the *preceptive* parts, that I cannot wish to do more than barely to refer to such works as are easily to be consulted: and that we may have the satisfaction of knowing that the friends of Revelation keep pace in learning and in zeal with its opponents, I shall be happy in referring chiefly to living authors, who have particularly applied their thoughts to the subject. See Dr. Parr's very able and learned Discourses, his *Spital Sermon*, April 1800; and his *Fast Sermon* of 1803; Mr. Hall's *Fast Sermon* of the same year; and his Discourse on *Modern Infidelity*: see also the works of an author I have often had occasion to cite; Mr. Fuller; particularly *The Gospel its own Witness*, Part I. ch. iv.: consult also Bishop Watson's *Apology for the Bible*; and Professor Brown's *Appendix* to 5th edition of *Leland's View of Deistical Writers*; a work which itself will supply enough upon the subject to satisfy any reasonable mind: see particularly his Letters in answer to Lord Shaftesbury, Letter V. and his VIIth Letter to Mr. Collins; Letter XIV. in answer to Mr. Chubb, and Letter XXI. to Mr. Hume. The two next I have to cite, I am sorry to say, are now no longer to be ranked among living authors, though they lived long enough to witness and deplore many of the follies of this age of Reason; and strenuous were they in their endeavours to stem the torrent of modern infidelity: but, alas!

“ ———Fugaces———

“ Labuntur anni! nec PIETAS moram

“ Rugis et instanti senectæ

“ Afferet indomitæque morti!”

“In full age and hoary holiness,” they are gone to rest! I speak of Dr. Beattie and Dr. MacLaine. They have both written admirably upon the misrepresentations alluded to in the Discourse, and should by all means be consulted; see *Beattie's Evidences of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 105—120; and Dr. MacLaine's very ingenious *Letters to Mr. Soame Jenyns on his Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*. There are some excellent remarks also in *Leng's Boyle's Lectures*, Sermon XXI.

I shall only add to this note, for the information of those who may not have paid much attention to the subject,

subject, a short specimen of the views that have been taken of *patriotism*, in this age of Reason : (one of the *virtues* which the Gospel has been accused of not *expressly recommending*.) It has been well shewn, that *ancient* patriotism was by no means a principle which the Gospel could generally countenance ; see *Lactantius*, lib. vi. §. 6. I shall endeavour to shew, that *modern* patriotism would as little deserve to be generally inculcated, as a principle of Christianity, as the patriotism to which Lactantius alludes.

In endeavouring to eradicate every *prejudice* of *education* that may be thought to stand in the way of this exalted virtue of *modern* patriotism, Helvetius ranks among the most obnoxious of these prejudices, that of "*filial affection*:" he adduces a *high* authority to prove that it is no *natural* principle. He thinks it must be admitted by those who allow the fifth Commandment of the Decalogue to proceed from God. "Si les hommes," says he, "étoient, comme on le dit, portés l'un vers l'autre par une attraction forte et mutuelle, le Législateur céleste leur eût-il commandé de s'aimer leurs peres et meres?" [We thank him for this irresistible proof of the necessity of a divine Revelation to supply the defects of the law of nature ; but this by the bye.] It would have been well, if, after making this use of the word of God, he would have had the decency to treat the principle of filial affection as at least a virtuous and good principle, being, by his own insinuation at least, expressly enjoined by God : but not so : he not only denies that God has laid the foundation for such an affection by any instinctive propensity or attachment ; but he insists upon it that he has given rather "*une force répulsive*," "*le désir naturel de l'indépendance*," which separates the daughter from the mother in marriage, and induces the son, for the sake of gain, or honour, or mere pleasure, to quit, "*avec plaisir, les foyers paternels*." He is so careful then of the *public good*, and *public happiness*, as to recommend some wholesome restraints to be placed upon this *private charity of life* : "*La trop grande force de ce lien*," he remarks, "*seroit funeste aux états* ;" "*la premiere passion du citoyen doit être celle des loix et du bien public*" — "*l'amour filial*"

“ doit être subordonné dans l’homme à l’amour patriotique.” It is well that he has not left us to find out for ourselves the *special* reason for moderating and restraining this *dangerous* principle. “ Qu’on en légitime. l’*excès*, qu’on le déclare le premier des amours, “ un fils est dès-lors en *droit de piller son voisin*, &c. &c. “ pour soulager le besoin d’un pere, ou pour *augmenter son aisance*.” This *right* to rob and steal, &c. &c. which M. Helvetius conceives must flow from any super-indulgence of filial affections, is a right, it seems, which his favourite law of nature confers : for certainly no law of God or man authorises theft and robbery, “ pour augmenter l’aisance” of either father or mother : but, according to Helvetius, it really *is* a *law of nature* : for he says, it is only the physical wants of man which keep him in a state of society ; that we associate solely for the sake of prey, “ comme les animaux carnassiers, “ tels que les renards et les loups :” and, for fear we should still suspect any thing amiable to be at the bottom of these social and domestic ties, he assures us, that the sociable principle argues nothing good, for, “ les “ loups font société, et ne sont pas bons.” In another place he observes, unless the love of one’s country be made the *first* of moral duties, a man may be a good father, husband, son ; but he cannot be a good *citizen*. “ Que de *crimes*,” he concludes, “ *l’amour des parens* “ n’a-t-il pas fait commettre !”

If such be modern patriotism, I am heartily glad that Deists have not an opportunity of charging Christianity with any encouragement of it. Lord Shaftesbury however, I must say, when *he* accused the Gospel of an omission in regard to the virtue of patriotism, seems not to have had such an ill opinion of filial affection either as Helvetius or Mr. Godwin ; for *he* pronounces it to be absolutely *wrong* to prefer an indifferent person to one’s father. *Enquiry concerning Virtue*, b. i. Part II.

Much has been written to vindicate Christianity from this charge of omission of some *public* virtues of high importance ; and from the above it may appear how necessary it has been, of late, to vindicate her from the charge of overlooking the private charities and virtues of social life. For my own part, I am persuaded that patriotism is, as far as it need to be, countenanced



tenanced by the Scriptures; but never at the expence of those private affections, which are, under all circumstances whatsoever, an honour to our nature; and which are most particularly calculated to form the basis of the *truest* and *most unexceptionable patriotism*. I feel assured also, that the Scriptures not only regard parental affection as a natural principle, but that the rank they assign to it in the scale of natural principles is, if not the first, most clearly the second. I conceive that *no other conclusion* can be drawn from *those* passages in Scripture, in which it is stated, that “a man shall *“leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife;”* and that, “if a man come not to Christ, and hate not *“his father, and mother, and wife, &c.* he cannot be *“his disciple,”* but that the *parental* affection is only second to the *conjugal*, as a *social* principle; but that *even these*, the *highest* and *most binding* of all *earthly ties*, must be sacrificed to the *love of God*, and his laws, if the case requires it. The term “hate,” which St. Luke uses, I conceive to be fully explained by the correspondent passage of St. Matthew; “He that loveth father and *“mother more than me:”* which I am disposed to regard not only as another strong proof of the case in point, but as no trifling argument for the divinity of our blessed Saviour; so strong are the expressions, and yet so personal, that if the love of God is intended, (and nothing less I think can be,) then Christ was God.

*Page 471. note (5).*

*It is further explained by the precept, that we should do unto others, as we would they should do unto us; that is, under a supposed change of circumstances, which is manifestly implied.]* “Some men are so subtle and disingenuous, that they will labour to puzzle and perplex the most simple truths, and to put obscure constructions upon the brightest maxims.” With this reflection Mr. Pyle begins an excellent discourse upon the very subject of this great Christian precept; in which he shews the true nature, meaning, and *limits* of this grand duty: for limits it certainly has; since, to refer again to the same excellent writer, “we are to  
“require

“ require of other men, and always to practise towards  
 “ them, *not* what a corrupt notion of our own interest,  
 “ nor what a wild fancy and imagination may prompt  
 “ us to wish were done; but what appears laudable  
 “ and honourable, equitable and reasonable to be  
 “ done.” The law therefore does not require, that a  
 magistrate should acquit a criminal, or a creditor a frau-  
 dulent debtor: but we are only bound by it (as another  
 eminent Divine expresses himself) “ to observe in all  
 “ cases that behaviour to others, which on similar oc-  
 “ casions we could, with *justice* and *reason*, expect to  
 “ receive from them.” See *Carr’s Sermons*, vol. ii. p.  
 228. See, on the union and coincidence of self-love and  
 benevolence, the references in Parr’s Notes to his *Spital*  
*Sermon*, p. 34.

May I be allowed to conclude this part of my sub-  
 ject in the words of the ingenious Mr. Baker, at  
 the close of his valuable *Reflections upon Learning*.  
 “ And now having gone through the several sorts of  
 “ learning, and observed the various *defects*, and oft-  
 “ times *uncertainties*, which they are subject to: the  
 “ conclusion is obvious; that since no satisfaction is to  
 “ be met with from them, we are to seek for it some-  
 “ where else, if happily it may be found. It may be  
 “ found, but not in our own powers, or by our own  
 “ strength; and that which our most exalted *Reason*,  
 “ under all its improvements, cannot yield us, is only  
 “ to be had from REVELATION. It is there we may  
 “ securely rest, after the mind has tried all other ways  
 “ and methods of knowledge, and has tired itself with  
 “ fruitless enquiries. And were there no other use  
 “ of human learning, there is at least this in it: that, by  
 “ its many defects, it brings the mind to a sense of its  
 “ own weakness, and makes it more readily, and with  
 “ greater willingness, submit to Revelation. God may  
 “ have so ordered in his wise Providence, thereby to  
 “ keep us in a constant dependence upon himself, and  
 “ under a necessity of consulting him in his Word;  
 “ which since profane men treat so neglectfully al-  
 “ ready, they would have it in greater contempt, and  
 “ it would be much more vile in their eyes, did they  
 “ find any thing *within them*, equally perfect, which  
 “ might

“ might guide them in their course, and ‘ bring them  
‘ to the haven where they would be.’ But this since  
“ they do not meet with, it ought to wean them from  
“ an opinion of themselves, and incline them to seek  
“ out satisfaction somewhere else, and to TAKE SHEL-  
“ TER WHERE IT MAY BE FOUND !”



---

## S E R M O N IX.

---

TITUS ii. 15.

*These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*

IN these directions of the Apostle to Titus, we have a summary of some of the principal duties of the ministerial office. First, “speak;” ταῦτα λάλει: secondly, “exhort;” καὶ παρακάλει: and thirdly, “Rebuke with all authority;” καὶ ἐλέγχε μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς. And then follows, μηδείς σε περιφρονεῖτω, “let no man despise thee.” The first would appear to refer to the mere enunciation of the Word; which in the primitive times was

<sup>a</sup> This Sermon, having been preached before the University, by appointment, on the Sunday immediately subsequent to the conclusion of the preceding Lecture, and the subject being accidentally such as easily to connect with the view there taken of Modern Infidelity, is here added.

assigned

assigned to the public *Readers* and *Deacons*. The second extends to the *preaching* of the Word, with *exhortation*, *intreaty*, and *advice*; the office more particularly of the *Bishops* and *Presbyters*<sup>b</sup>. And the third to the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline and censures, which of course belonged to the superiors of the Church. None of these things were to be intermitted; but especially the latter, which was to give effect to the other two; and to which, in all likelihood, the words, “let no man despise thee,” more immediately apply: that is, as I conceive, let none despise your authority, or assume to themselves a licence to transgress, for want of having the laws of God properly enforced upon them, and secured in all respect due to them.

But there is another sense given to the verb *περιφρονέω*<sup>c</sup>, by which it is held to signify not merely a defiance or neglect, but such a kind of contempt, as from one who *looks*

<sup>b</sup> See *Potter on Church Government*; and *Bingham's Origines Ecclesiasticæ*.

<sup>c</sup> See *Erasmus* on the passage; *Leigh's Critica Sacra*; and *Parkhurst*.

*down* upon another as his inferior in power, in station, or in wisdom. And perhaps it is to this latter sort of contempt, more particularly, that the Clergy of our own days are exposed; which amounts rather to a contempt of God's Word, than of his minister. For there are many disposed to scoff at our preaching, and despise our exhortations, and defy our reproofs, through a self-conceit of their own superior talents, and unlimited freedom, which sets them above all advice and assistance, all ecclesiastical interference, and even, as they think, the interposition of God himself.

There is no doubt but that we have much relaxed in the exercise of some of those external powers, with which the Church first invested its ministers. Ecclesiastical censures are now seldom heard of; and excommunication subsists rather as a *civil* than an ecclesiastical punishment; is seldom, if ever, denounced for moral pravity, or any acts of mere irreligion. Is this relaxation in discipline to be regarded as a mark of indifference, or of timidity, or of any sense of weakness in the Clergy? By no means. It is to be attributed to the conduct and manners of  
the

the *other* members of the Church, which have rendered these acts of discipline of none effect. Excommunication, for instance, must needs have lost its power of reforming, when, in consequence of the prevailing manners of the world, the two passions, upon which it used to work, shame and fear, have lost their effect. “*Note that man,*” saith the Apostle, “*and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*<sup>d</sup> ;” and, through the wholesome operation of that shame, reformed and brought to repentance : for this was the great object of that particular act of discipline, as well as to terrify others by the example<sup>e</sup>. But who is there that would now disdain to associate with the excommunicated ? or what fear do the generality of men stand in, either of temporal or ecclesiastical disgrace, for their evil doings ? The Sacraments also are so lamentably neglected, that to be excluded from them is no dishonour, as in times past ; and it would seem to



<sup>d</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 14.

<sup>e</sup> See *Beza*, *Grotius*, and *Doddridge* on the passage ; and *Leigh's Critica Sacra*, voce *Ἐκκλήσια*. See also *Bingham's Orig. Eccles.* b. xvi. ch. ii. §. 12.



be a greater inconvenience to many to be driven *to* the altar of God, than *from* it. It would be making a mockery of God's holy institutions to expose them to such flight and scorn.

But the age has claimed to be regarded as an enlightened age; and if so, the Clergy might well expect to have *more* rather than *less* influence, and to be able to relax in matters of external discipline, through a hope of having more internal authority. They might reasonably expect to be able to lay aside compulsion in enforcing the laws of God, when good sense and reason were to be assistants in the cause. For the laws of God are still *pretended* to be the object of all men's researches, though too many disdain to look for them where alone they are to be found. But, as Solomon says, "*Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him!*" It is not the Clergy who are despised in these days, as I observed before; it is Revelation itself that is set at nought, and the laws, and ordinances, and doctrines of the Gospel, that

<sup>s</sup> Proverbs xxvi, 12.

are slighted and contemned. But, as it has been admirably said of ridicule, that it can never be the test of truth, because truth must in the end be the test of ridicule<sup>s</sup>, the same may be said of contempt. Contempt can never prove either things or persons to be contemptible; these must be proved to be contemptible, to sanction the contempt.

Certainly, it must be granted, many laws may be contemptible, and a vain assumption of authority is always so: but the laws we have to administer we conceive to be the express laws of God; and that they were revealed from above, together with many other circumstances intimately connected not only with our well being in this life, but with our salvation and redemption from sin and misery in the life to come. We conceive, that by a regular succession from those who were first appointed to promulgate this Revelation, it is our *peculiar* office to teach our brethren, to instruct them in the truth, to admonish them of the consequences of their actions, to point out the way of salvation, and of happiness here and hereafter;

<sup>s</sup> Preface to *Letters on Infidelity*. Oxford, 1784.

and even to open to them the gates of heaven. The most fatal contempt then that we are exposed to is a denial of all this ; either an open refusal on the part of others to be instructed, or a manifest distrust of our mission and appointment. Some say we never were sent ; and many, that they need no teaching. Those who think we never were sent deny the fact of Revelation : those who say they need no teaching deny the utility of it. The fact of Revelation it is their business to disprove who deny it : the utility of Revelation may, I think, be made apparent, from the very conduct of those who so peremptorily deny it. To prove it from the Scriptures is to little purpose in such a case : even the ways of God and the thoughts of God must, it seems, be submitted to the test of *Reason*. In proving the utility of Revelation in the way I propose, I shall hope to prove also the utility of that authority we presume to be delegated to us ; and to shew how consistent with right Reason it is to expect, that there should be such a constitution of things.

Now it is exceedingly obvious, and always has been so, if the generality of the world

would but have attended to it, that those who put themselves most forward to expose the Priesthood, who most notoriously renounce their authority, and despise their interference, are never so much bent upon establishing their great point of man's *independency*, as when they are employed in withdrawing those from their dependence on the Church, who should be taught by the Priesthood; for no other reason, but that *they* may have leave to instruct them themselves, and to rule and direct their consciences as they please. It is a snare and a delusion, therefore, to pretend that submission to the Priesthood is slavery; that every man is self-taught, who will attend to the dictates of his own judgment, and the emotions of his own heart; and that every man is at liberty to serve God in the way that seemeth best in his own eyes, when these teachers themselves assume the direction <sup>h</sup>.

I have already observed, that any vain as-

<sup>h</sup> Mr. Paine has assured the world, that "every man's mind is his own Church." The sectarists between the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II. inculcated the same maxim; and it is much insisted on in a pamphlet, that made some noise in its time, entitled, *The Sufficiency of the Spirit's Teaching*, by a man of the name of *How*.

sumption

sumption of authority is justly contemptible; and nothing certainly could be more so, than to pretend to be the ministers of *God's* word and will, without his especial appointment and consent. But do not they assume this very authority in the most unwarrantable manner, who presume to tell the world, not only that God never *has* revealed himself to man, otherwise than in the visible creation; but that he never *could do so*<sup>i</sup>? Do not those

<sup>i</sup> It is very well observed by a sensible French writer, that among Deists and Infidels, “ le grand mot de *religion naturelle* “ n'est qu'un leurre dont ils se servent pour nous détacher plus “ aisément du Christianisme:” and he then notices the multiplicity of discordant opinions, out of which we must be content to take our choice, if once we reject Christianity. They are indeed innumerable. The few that are mentioned by the author alluded to are still too many to introduce into a note; but Mr. Soame Jenyns has given us a shorter summary of the wanderings of human Reason, which was not only not extravagant when he wrote it, but may serve for a faithful picture of the exact state of the case at present. “ Reason,” says he, “ when left to the guidance of her own wild imaginations, has “ persuaded some, that there is no God; others, that there can “ be no future state: she has taught some, that there is no difference between virtue and vice; and that to cut a man's “ throat, and to relieve his necessities, are actions equally meritorious. She has convinced many, that they have no free-will in opposition to their own experience; some, that there “ can be no such thing as soul, or spirit, contrary to their own

assume *this* authority, who, without the *smallest pretension* to a divine mission, venture to assure the whole world, that any external revelation of God's will and designs is unnecessary? who venture to tell their fellow creatures, not only how they are to be saved, but how they *must* be saved? who venture to secure them against all future punishment of sin, all fear of hell, or a judgment to come; without being in any manner able to answer for the evil consequences of an error in judgment? "When Noah  
 " followed the direction of God in building  
 " the ark for the saving of his house, the  
 " world was against him. To them no ark

" perceptions; and others, no such thing as matter, or body,  
 " in contradiction to their senses: by analysing all things she  
 " can shew, that there is nothing in any thing; by perpetual  
 " sifting she can reduce all existence to the invisible dust of  
 " scepticism; and by recurring to first principles prove, to the  
 " satisfaction of her followers, that there are no principles at  
 " all." I think I might almost venture at once to appeal to  
 the foregoing Lectures, in proof of every thing here asserted;  
 in proof that the wanderings of human Reason are always  
 equally strange, and that the great advancement of knowledge,  
 which many are so proud to boast, has not served to bring Deists  
 and Infidels into *agreement* upon any of the most essential  
 points either of religion or morality!

" was

“ was necessary, because they had in their  
“ supreme wisdom previously determined a-  
“ mong themselves, that there would be no  
“ flood <sup>k</sup>.” The cases surely are parallel.

It is common, and always has been so, but perhaps never more than of late years, for the greatest Infidels to pretend to know the whole will of Heaven, far better than those who have the testimony of history, and prophecy, and miracles, and therefore of the spirit of God himself, to support their commission. Nor is this to be much wondered at. By denying the *possibility* of an external and supernatural revelation, they easily fall into the folly, which Lactantius has so ably exposed<sup>1</sup>, of people who pretend to know every thing concerning some distant city, the name only of which had reached their ears. They may, says he, describe every thing upon conjecture as they please, though liable to be confuted by the first traveller who should visit the place: “ Atqui hoc  
“ idem faciunt philosophi,” says he, “ qui  
“ disputant quid in *cœlo* agatur:” and he adds, “ Quod *si existimarent descensurum*

<sup>k</sup> *Essay on the Church.*

<sup>1</sup> *Institut.* lib. iii. c. 3.

“ *esse aliquem* qui eos delirare, ac mentiri  
 “ doceret, nunquam quicquam de *iis rebus*  
 “ quas *scire non possunt*, disputarent.” And  
 thus absurdly, without doubt, do all those  
 act, who pretend to assert, that they can  
 discover all the ways of heaven by the light  
 of their own reason ; and presume, that as  
 they have never themselves had any inter-  
 course with those who have been in heaven,  
 they need never believe, that any can, at any  
 time, have come from thence to instruct  
 mankind. But it might be affirmed, that  
 the very nature of man, as well as the histo-  
 ry of man, and even the visible condition of  
 things, all conspire to prove the extreme  
 probability of such a Revelation, if right  
 Reason may really be suffered to decide.

For if this globe of earth, which we in-  
 habit, has a connection with the rest of the  
 universe, and man is immortal, or even ca-  
 pable of immortality, it is not *reasonable* to  
 confine his views, or even his knowledge,  
 entirely to the spot he at present inhabits<sup>m</sup>;

<sup>m</sup> See Seneca's Preface to his *Natural Questions*. “ O quam  
 “ contempta res est homo, nisi *supra humana* se erexerit !”—  
 “ *Sursum* ingentia spatia sunt, in quorum *possessionem* animus  
 “ admittitur.”—“ Cum illa tetigit, alitur, crescit ; ac velut  
 “ vinculis



We see, it is true, no beings *now* descending from heaven to instruct us; we see none ascending thither to give us assurance of our own ascent: but we nevertheless expect, that our being will be extended beyond the grave; and that when we appear to have totally done with this earth, we may still not have done with the *universe*. We may reasonably regard ourselves, therefore, as inhabitants of the universe, and fitted already to hold some sort of converse and communication with the beings above us. Though we have therefore no sensible communication at present with any other parts of the *universe*, beyond this terraqueous globe, yet that we have all an interest beyond the confines of this earth, if some doubt, almost all believe, and none can positively deny.

That God should have communicated with *man* then, in some stage of his existence, is most *consonant* to *Reason*, if it is most reasonable to suppose man is to live again: and this I believe will be pretty generally grant-



“vinculis liberatus, in originem redit.—Et hoc habet argumentum divinitatis suæ; quod illum divina delectant: nec ut *alienis* interest, sed ut  *suis*.”

ed,

ed, from the almost universal consent of men, learned and ignorant, Jew and Greek, Pagan and Christian. For though indeed such wise and eminent men as Epictetus, Seneca, Cicero, Cæsar, Pliny, Catullus, Persius, Horace<sup>n</sup>, and more that I could mention, seem upon some occasions to have doubted of it; yet they certainly did not entirely disbelieve it, and have sometimes argued otherwise<sup>o</sup>: and that they doubted at all, if it proves any thing, can only serve to shew, that if we *are* to live again; if this great and consoling doctrine is true; we require to be assured of it otherwise than by argument, or the mere conjectures of philosophy<sup>p</sup>. It is not from

<sup>n</sup> See *Epictetus apud Arrian*, lib. iii. c. 13. *Seneca's Consolatio ad Marciam*, c. 19. *Cicero pro Cluentio*, lxi. *Tuscul. Disput.* lib. i. 11. epist. iii. 4. lib. vi. epist. xxi. lib. vi. *Cæsar apud Sallustium in Bello Catilinariæ*. *Pliny, Nat. Hist.* lib. ii. c. 7. lib. vii. c. 55. *Catullus ad Lesbiam*, 5. *Persius*, Sat. v. 152. *Hor.* lib. i. Od. xxiv. 5. Od. xxviii. 15. lib. iv. Od. vii. Epist. lib. i. Ep. xvi. 79.

<sup>o</sup> This is particularly the case, as is well known, with Cicero and Seneca.

<sup>p</sup> Mr. Hume calls the question concerning Providence and a future state, "the most speculative question of all philosophy." *Essays*, vol. ii. §. 11. Is not this as much as to admit the uncertainty of such enquiries, where Reason only is our guide; and to prove the unspeakable blessing and benefit of a divine Revelation?

beings like ourselves that we can learn it ; only from *God* ; for “ *HE* it was who made “ us *all*, and not we ourselves.”

As for the instrumentality of man in carrying on a system of revealed religion, originating from God himself, I shall hope to be able to shew, that this also is quite consonant to Reason, and deducible from the common course of things. For if men are not to be governed thus, by a divine Revelation in the first instance, and human instruction in the second, we must submit to be governed, as I have partly shewn already, by *human* instruction and human *authority*, in the first, and last, and every instance. This perhaps may seem strange to some ; but indeed natural Religion has *her* priests and *her* prophets, and, I may add, *stands in need* of both.

Many of the laws instituted by man are strictly moral laws, and universally allowed to be necessary to restrain men's passions ; so much so, that among the many strange systems of Deists, it has been insisted on by more than one celebrated writer<sup>a</sup>, that the

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Hobbes has insisted upon the laws of the state being the only standard of morality, in the *fullest* manner : but other writers

civil law is the sole foundation of right and wrong, and that even religion has no obligation, but as enjoined by the magistrate. Not however to insist upon such an absurdity, the moral and restraining laws alluded to may certainly be regarded as an additional instruction on the part of wise legislators, engrafted on the law of nature, and to a certain degree explanatory of it<sup>r</sup>. And

writers have intimated as much, particularly Lord Bolingbroke, who allows of *no other* sanctions or penalties, than the laws of the land, to enforce the *law of nature*. See his *Works*, vol. v. p. 90.

<sup>r</sup> See *Puffendorf De Officio Hominis et Civis*; and *Buddæus's Historia Juris Naturalis*, prefixed to the London edition of 1758, §§. 3, 4, &c.

Helvetius in the 3d ch. of the 7th sect. of his Treatise *De l'Homme*, has the following note. "Tout crime non puni par la loi est un crime journellement commis. Quelle plus forte preuve de l'inutilité des religions?" In answer to which, we might surely insist, that no better proof could be adduced of the absolute need of Revelation. The morals of a nation, Helvetius pretends, depend solely on the magistrate and the established civil laws. And yet he says elsewhere, that Reason without Revelation is able to instruct man in every moral duty. Now if the latter is the case, why *any* laws to enforce the practice of morality? Or if *some* laws are necessary, as Helvetius admits, and those crimes are common which the civil law does not reach, what can restrain men from *such crimes*, but a revealed law? to enforce at least all such dictates of Reason, and duties of the law natural, which the law of the  
state

may we not ask here, if the visible works of God are so inefficacious in regard to this great object of the right government of men's passions, that weak and fallible men are obliged to give them *their* support, shall not God himself rather have added express laws to this effect ? The contrary would be to make men both wiser and better than God, in providing for the order of the world.

In regard also to *other* knowledge deducible from a view of nature, how should we ever know all that is to be known of God's *power, skill, and infinite wisdom*, as displayed

state had not meddled with ? In both cases, it is evident, according to Helvetius himself, that extraordinary sanctions and additional motives are wanting. M. Helvetius indeed has a curious way of getting rid of this conclusion in another place. "On veut," says he, "que la morale soit l'œuvre de Dieu : mais elle fait en tout pays partie de la législation des peuples. Or la législation est des hommes. Si Dieu est réputé l'auteur de la morale, c'est qu'il l'est de la raison humaine, et que la morale est l'œuvre de cette raison." But human laws are clearly intended to govern those who will not be governed by the law natural ; therefore the law natural is not sufficient, without a further interference on the part of God ; though, M. Helvetius *pretends*, only through the medium of the human Reason : but why not by revealed laws, and human ministry and apostleship ?

in

in the structure of the world, but from *naturalists, astronomers, anatomists, chemists*, and other *experimental philosophers*, wiser than the generality of mankind, and indeed alone capable of investigating such curious matters? *Natural* religion therefore must not only be *taught*, but in many instances even its most important laws enforced by additional ordinances, and additional sanctions. The question then does not lie so much between revealed and natural religion as is generally thought, and so often pretended, as between a divine and human *exposition* of the *laws of nature*, and the *will and attributes of our Creator*: and it is indeed no small inconsistency into which Deists and Free-thinkers fall, that while they pretend against Revelation, that every one is competent to judge for himself, and should be left at liberty to do so exclusively, yet *they* persist in thinking for the rest of the world, and judging for them most decisively; having all the while no *assurance* to give them of future rewards or punishments, in case they should be right; and what is more, of any indemnity for rejecting Christianity, supposing *it* to be true.

I shall

I shall now hope to have shewn, upon the mere footing of Reason, that the Christian Priesthood is not to be slighted, nor their authority suspected, because they claim to be a body set apart for the instruction and regulation of their fellow creatures; for such a body is necessary for the propagation and support even of natural religion\*: that their

\* Mr. Hamilton Reid, in his account of Infidel Societies, published in 1800, gives an account of the proceedings in the metropolis, which I should have concluded to be true, from its being so consonant to the common course of things, even if we had had no positive voucher for it. "Next to songs in which, "the Clergy were a standing subject of abuse, the tables of the, "club-rooms were frequently strewed with penny, two-penny, "and three-penny publications, as it were so many swivels "against established opinions; while, to enable the members "to furnish themselves with the heavy artillery of Voltaire, "Godwin, &c. reading-clubs were formed: but still, it so happened, that those who despised the labour of reading, took "their creeds implicitly from the extemporaneous effusions of "others, whose talents were comparatively above their own. "And yet, these people were invariably in the habit of ridiculing Christians, in concert with the orators, for being "blindly led by Priests." See also on the same subject an excellent publication on the consequences of schism, entitled, "*Unity the Bond of Peace*;" published anonymously 1802. It is remarkable, that many of the cheap works disseminated among the people to withdraw them from the Church, have both the form and name of *Creeds* and *Catechisms*; perhaps in derision, but still with a tacit acknowledgment, that Creeds and Catechisms

pretension to a *divine* mission is not in Reason to be despised or slighted as such, because, as beings connected with the universe as well as with this small planet, an intercourse with superior beings is exceedingly probable, and must be possible. It appears also that their claim to be the accredited ministers of such a Revelation is not in reason to be slighted or despised, because without a perpetual miracle human instruments must be employed; and because the Christian Priesthood derive their authority through an uninterrupted succession, from those who have testified, and sealed their testimony with their blood; thus attesting that they had positive and indisputable proof of God's presence and power, and especial consent, in the peculiar circumstances of their own mission and appointment.

There is certainly therefore nothing unreasonable, nothing to which a true philosopher can find cause to object, in the constitution of the Christian Church: and after what has been said, I cannot pretend to give a more

Catechisms are useful, where the people are to be instructed, and any important principles of belief or practice impressed upon their minds.

just



juſt deſcription of it, than in the words of a  
 moſt celebrated and zealous defender of it.  
 “ In this,” ſaith he, “ the Church differs  
 “ from all other ſocieties; becauſe *they* be-  
 “ long to *this* world, and *their* rights and  
 “ privileges are confined to it: whereas the  
 “ Church extends to both worlds, the viſible  
 “ and the inviſible, and is partly on earth,  
 “ and partly in heaven. In its earthly  
 “ members it is viſible; in its rulers it  
 “ is viſible; in its worſhip it is viſible; in  
 “ its ſacraments it is viſible: but being alſo  
 “ a ſpiritual ſociety, it hath a *life* which is  
 “ *hidden*; and in the inward and ſpiritual  
 “ grace of all its outward ordinances it is  
 “ inviſible. As a kingdom, in which God  
 “ is Judge, and Chriſt is a Mediator, and an-  
 “ gels and ſaints departed are members; it  
 “ takes in the heaven itſelf, and is the *hea-*  
 “ *venly Jeruſalem*, which is *the Mother of*  
 “ *us all*; inſomuch that when we are ad-  
 “ mitted into it, our *converſation is in hea-*  
 “ *ven*, and the angels of heaven are our fel-  
 “ low ſervants; all making one great family  
 “ under Jeſus Chriſt, in whom all things are  
 “ gathered together in one, both which are  
 “ in heaven, and which are on earth. On

“ which consideration, what is rightly done  
 “ in the Church on earth, stands good in  
 “ heaven, as if it had been done there ; and  
 “ the apostles of Christ received from him  
 “ *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, with a  
 “ power of *binding* and *loosing*, which ex-  
 “ tends to heaven itself : and when Chris-  
 “ tians go to heaven, they are not carried  
 “ into a new society, for they are already,  
 “ by the grace of God, translated into it by  
 “ baptism <sup>t</sup>.”

Such is the Christian Church, and such  
 the character of the Christian ministry. It  
 is melancholy to think how many suppose,  
 that by *slighting* our authority they in fact  
*lessen*, if not wholly *destroy* it ; as if it was  
 in the power of man to abrogate an ordi-  
 nance of God ! Authority we claim none,  
 but such as we maintain to have been dele-  
 gated to us by God for the good of others.  
 We are to render “ an account,” it is most  
 true ; and so far it is a charge of the greatest  
 personal importance to ourselves : but the  
 account we have to render will *relate to the*  
*condition of those*, who are amenable, or  
*should be so*, to our administration. We

<sup>t</sup> *Essay on the Church*, ch. ii.

<sup>u</sup> Hebrews xiii. 17.

know,

know, for the Lord hath spoken it by the mouth of his Prophet<sup>x</sup>, that if we “ speak “ not to warn the wicked from his wicked “ way, to save his life,” though “ he die in “ his iniquity, his blood will be required at “ *our* hands :” but by the same authority we are assured, that if we do “ warn the “ wicked, and he turn not from his wicked- “ nefs, nor from his wicked way, *he* shall “ die in *his* iniquity ; but we shall have de- “ livered our souls.” Neither will the account we have to render relate only to those who willingly submit themselves to our authority, and continue stedfast in the unity of the Church ; but it must in the nature of things extend to those also, who shall have gone out from us, and to those who shall have neglected the heavenly call ; the *Schismatic*, whom we could not *reclaim*, and the *Infidel*, whom we have not been able to *convert*. We are not the ministers of Christ in any low sense of the word ; we are the “ pastors” of “ his flock<sup>y</sup> ;” his “ ministers “ of reconciliation<sup>z</sup> ;” the “ stewards of his “ mysteries<sup>a</sup> ;” the “ ambassadors of his

<sup>x</sup> Ezekiel iii. 18, 19.

<sup>y</sup> Ephes. iv. 11. 1 Peter v. 2.

<sup>z</sup> 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 1.

“ grace <sup>b</sup>.” Those who despise the Christian priesthood, therefore, and oppose their authority, reject all the graces and benefits, of which they are appointed the dispensers.

But the contempt cannot but be much aggravated by men’s persisting to seek and to accept all these dispensations at the hands of others; for pardon and grace are not of such small concern in the eyes of fallen man, as that he may be under any circumstances wholly indifferent about them. Those who will not have even God himself to “ *bind*” them, will suffer *any man* to *set them free*. And therefore it is, that every heresy, and even every system of infidelity, has its own means of grace, and measures of security, which God never sanctioned, and which right Reason can never approve. Hence not only all the extravagances, which superstition and enthusiasm have engendered and still encourage, but the inadequate and unholy expedients of Deism and Infidelity. If superstition has in some instances imposed burthens, which God never required at our hands, Deists and Infidels have continually

<sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. v. 20.

assumed a power of *absolving all men from the weight and punishment of their sins*, without the smallest pretence to a divine commission, and yet with the most confident assurances, that whatever *they so* “*loose on* “*earth, shall be loosed in heaven.*” Thus men are taught to believe, that they shall be saved, either by morality without devotion, or by election without morality: by sincerity without faith, or faith without sincerity: by immediate inspiration without teaching, or by reason and nature in disregard of both: by God’s mercy alone, without redemption or atonement; or finally by annihilation and destruction, which are to cancel all delinquencies, and preclude all judgment<sup>c</sup>.

This is but a very brief summary of the many different expedients invented by man for his own security, in contempt or in abuse of God’s holy word, and the means of grace which he himself has appointed. It is a de-

<sup>c</sup> “Non ignoro plerisque conscientia meritorum, nihil se “esse per mortem magis optare quam credere; malunt enim “extingui penitus, quam ad supplicia reparari.” *Minutius Felix*.

plorable inconsistency that some men fall into, that while they affect to despise not only the reproofs, but the *absolutions* of the Christian ministry, they are ready enough to adopt the several expedients suggested by the reason of man; though their great variety alone might, one would think, be sufficient to occasion a just suspicion and distrust of their power and efficacy.

But to conclude. If ever there was a period wherein the Christian ministry might glory in the purity and perfection of the laws they have to enforce and to administer; in the sublimity of the doctrines they have to publish and proclaim; in the consolations they have to offer; the hopes they have to propose; the prospects they have to unfold; the sound advice, the sure assistance, the ready help, the heavenly encouragement they have to supply: if ever the Church might be set open with a reasonable hope, that every prudent and wise man would obey the heavenly call, and eagerly enter into the sanctuary of Christ's mercy; surely it must be in an age like the present; wherein so much has been done, and is doing, in various

ous

ous parts of the world, to perplex and confound<sup>d</sup>, if not entirely to destroy, the very first and most elementary principles of religion and morality: when, in regard to *future*, some would confidently assure us, that death is a perpetual sleep<sup>e</sup>: when others have been known to boast of their disbelief, not only of Revelation, but of the very existence of God himself<sup>f</sup>: when many, after decrying Christianity as a system of the basest superstition, have bowed down again to stocks and stones, trees of liberty, and goddesses of Reason<sup>g</sup>! when others would degrade us from the rank of free agents, to subject us to a fatality as blind and irresist-

<sup>d</sup> What perplexity and confusion the *German Novelists* have endeavoured to introduce into modern Ethics, may be judged of from the titles of their works, as the ingenious Mrs. West has well observed: "The Pitiab! Adulterers;"—"The Noble Lie;"—"Generous Revenge;"—"The Honest Thieves;"—"The Guiltless Parricide;"—"Errors of Virtue;"—"Amiable Indiscretions;"—"The Innocent Slanderer;"—and "Delicate Anger." *Letters to her Son*, vol. iii. p. 155.

<sup>e</sup> When the religion of REASON was proclaimed in France, it was decreed, and engraved on their tombs, that "*Death is an eternal sleep*."

<sup>f</sup> See *M. Dupont's Speech*; which, with a few exceptions, was applauded by the whole National Convention of France.

<sup>g</sup> See Note (15). Sermon I.

ble as the ascent of light, or the descent of heavy bodies<sup>h</sup>: when some would rob the soul of its immaterial essence, and render it as naturally corruptible as the mouldering urn, as transitory as the morning cloud<sup>i</sup>: when some, in their lust for liberty, would give an unlimited freedom to the worst passions of human nature, and absolve men from ties and connections, which were designed to be the chief bonds of society, the joy of every heart, and the source of every comfort<sup>k</sup>: when suicide, adultery, concubinage, and even, in one instance, infanticide, have not only been approved, but, I may say, even inculcated and recommended<sup>l</sup>. Surely we may well say, with the

<sup>h</sup> See Sermon IV. and the Notes.

<sup>i</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>k</sup> See Note from *Helvetius*, Sermon VIII. Note (4). and *Parr's Spital Sermon*.

<sup>l</sup> See *Godwin's Works*; *Hall's Sermon on Modern Infidelity*, pp. 46. 52; *Fuller on Deism*, Part I. ch. iii. vii.

I find in a publication before me the following short abstract of Mr. Godwin's moral and political principles, as they are to be collected from his *original* work on Political Justice, &c. Original I call it, not as the product of his own genius; for perhaps there is not one position in it that was not borrowed from French Infidels and French Revolutionists; but to distinguish it from subsequent editions, which I may not have seen, but in which I believe Mr. Godwin found occasion to retract



Apostle, " This is not the wisdom that de-

tract much of what he had originally insisted on, as indisputable truths. Mr. Godwin then, in his Political Justice as well as in his other works, certainly endeavours to establish these positions; " that to love our parents, our children, or our country, is contemptible superstition; that to make or to observe " promises or oaths, is immoral; that gratitude is a vice; " marriage an odious monopoly; remorse a prejudice; and " crimes *mistakes*: that the murderer is no more an object of " indignation or punishment than the dagger with which he " kills; that all property is usurpation, all government tyrannical, all laws oppression, and all religion imposture." This is, to my certain knowledge, a just account of the doctrines Mr. Godwin has thought fit to inculcate and maintain in his writings. But there is still one particular position not immediately noticed in the above abstract, which, as it may interfere with what I conceive to be a great Christian duty, I shall offer some remarks upon, and with that conclude. St. Peter expects us to " submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's " sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the *punishment* of evil-doers, and for the *praise* of them that do well." Εἰς ἐνδύνασιν κακοποιῶν, ἡπαίρον δὲ ἀγαθοποιῶν. He enjoins to " honour all men; to love the brotherhood; to fear God; " and to honour the king." But Mr. Godwin, in his tender concern for morality, truth, and justice, assures us, that he thinks them in the utmost danger in *monarchies* of all sorts. The outward appendages of royalty, in giving distinction to the individual, are, *he* says, a violation of truth and justice, and an offence to virtue, as rendering them of consequence in the eyes of the multitude. But the case is greatly mistaken, or much misrepresented. If these things were designed to express the worth of the *man*, instead of the state and dignity of the prince;

“ scends from above ; but is earthly, sensual,

prince ; or to set one man above another, merely as man ; then both truth and justice might occasionally be violated ; and virtue equally offended, if such paraphernalia were *opposed* to the amiable qualities of a good heart. That such a mistake as Mr. Godwin himself makes, is not likely however to be general, we might conclude from his own remarks ; “ Is it *possible*,” he asks, “ that an individual, who by severe labour earns a scanty subsistence, if by accident or curiosity he becomes a spectator of a royal progress, should not mentally apostrophize this elevated mortal, and ask, what has made thee to differ from me ? If no such sentiment pass through his mind,” Mr. Godwin adds, “ it is a proof that the corrupt institutions of society have already divested him of all sense of justice.” That such a sentiment passes through the mind of many a man who has not learnt to govern himself by the Christian precept, of honouring those who are in authority over us, I have no doubt : but justice, I will venture to say, is *most* violated by not “ rendering to every man his due, custom to whom custom, honour to whom honour.”

In regarding a king as a *different man from ourselves*, it may be either as a king or a man. If we mean to take account of his moral character, or religious principles, or of the fashion of his body, then every thing appertaining to royalty can only be considered as adventitious ; he is then simply a man ; and truth and justice would be violated, if we were to regard him as a god or an angel ; if we were to account him *good*, merely because he was *great*, or *wise*, merely in that his trappings were *splendid*. But if we designed to take account of him as a prince, if his state and authority are legal, justice should require that we regard those differences only which are adventitious to the man ; for in these only can it be pretended, that any difference or distinction consists. Who indeed can make  
a king,

“ devilish.” How different the wisdom that

a king, is still another question. Mr. Godwin says, “ No authority is so paramount as to make that to be law, which abstract and immutable justice had not made to be law previously to that interposition ;” and therefore he concludes, that “ Legislation is not applicable to human society.” We shall not stop to discuss this point : it is enough to know, that in the very same page, in which this *legislative* authority is questioned, a delegated executive authority is admitted ; so that, for what I can see, a king certainly may be made, though abstract and immutable justice shall have made no express provision for such an appointment. But still should a king be made, it is, it seems, *imposture*. “ It must be laid down as a first principle, that monarchy is founded in imposture. It is false, that kings are entitled to the eminence they possess.” This is another gross mistake or misrepresentation, or both ; not perhaps as men, but certainly as executive governors ! However, “ All imposture is trifling with morality and truth.” We grant it ; but it is no imposture to make one man great, though millions continue in a low and mean condition. It might be imposture to insist upon one man being accounted good, and the rest vile and wretched. But when Mr. Godwin says, that “ by a monarchical institution the standard of *intellectual merit* is no longer the man, but the title,” he either says what is not the truth, for want of understanding the question before him ; or understanding it properly, he says what is not the truth concerning it, which is worse. The king’s title alone is made no standard of *intellectual merit*, in any sense whatever, or under any form whatsoever of monarchical government.

But “ *Virtue* is offended by monarchy.” How ? Why, “ the first lesson of *virtue* is, Fear no man ; the first lesson of monarchy is, Fear the king. The first lesson of *virtue* is, Obey no man ; the first lesson of monarchy is, Obey the king.”

We

is from above : “ *That,*” says the Apostle,

We must not mistake Mr. Godwin’s terms: in a marginal note he is considerate enough to tell us, that he means to speak of *fortitude* and *pusillanimity*; so that *virtue* in the above passages is not what an uninformed Englishman would suspect, and by which, I think, he might be easily misled, but the Latin “*virtus.*” However, the first lesson, I am certain, of limited monarchy (which is the monarchy we have the happiness to live under, and which Mr. Godwin includes in his strictures) is strictly consistent with Christianity, morality, and justice; Honour the king; *Fear* and *obey* the *laws* he has to administer. But we have not yet done. “Justice, truth, and virtue revolt with indignation,” says Mr. Godwin, “against the maxim of our constitution, that the “king can do no wrong.” Justice, truth, and virtue all conspire to give to a king of this country such a security. He has no means of doing wrong to any individual, but with the advice and cooperation of his ministers; and therefore these latter are fitly made responsible, not for the acts of the king, but for their own concurrence and support. We must not venture to defend the maxim as a *fiction* of law or politics; for no doubt the very word *fiction* will condemn us: but that Mr. Godwin’s interpretation of the maxim is in defiance of *common sense*, may I think be sufficiently seen, in a critique which has lately appeared, on a work in which such fictions are particularly objected to: see the *Edinburgh Review*, No. vii. Art. i.

Mr. Godwin concludes with telling us, that aristocracy agrees with monarchy in many respects, and democracy has also its evils. Mr. Godwin prefers the latter; and consistently enough; for he assures us, that the thing most necessary in a government is, “to remove all restraints which hold “the mind back from its natural flight.” That this is most likely to happen in a democracy, at least in the first establishment

“ is first pure, then peaceable, full of mercy

ment of a democracy, few, I think, will doubt. But Mr. Godwin in his remarks on *aristocracy* notices the origin of its name, and the correspondent Roman title, “ *Optimates*.” Really Mr. Godwin would seem here to have some ground to rest his arguments on, when he would infer, that the title of dominion was designed to be a standard of moral excellence : but though even here there would be a manifest fallacy, it ought surely to have struck Mr. Godwin, that neither in the Greek title, *Βασιλεὺς*, nor yet in the Roman *Rex*, nor yet in the English title of *King*, is there the smallest allusion either to moral virtue, or intellectual merit.

But to conclude : *If* all that Mr. Godwin has asserted could be supposed true ; *if* monarchy was really the imposture he pretends ; *if* truth and justice were so much violated, in the state and splendour of princes, as that we were taught to think they must be good in proportion to their greatness, and wise in proportion to their splendour ; what could serve to strip the veil off, but the pure and equal laws of Christianity ? It has been objected to the Gospel, that it lays down no rules for the administration of public affairs, but applies its precepts and its sanctions to the hearts of individuals *only*. “ The observation,” says a very learned contemporary of Mr. Godwin’s, “ is, I grant, defensible, when properly understood. For let it “ not be imagined, that magistrates, legislators, and warriors, “ as such, are unconcerned in those precepts here, or in those “ sanctions hereafter: *they* too are individuals ; *they* are endowed “ with moral faculties ; *they* are placed in a state of moral pro- “ bation ; *they* are invested with privileges which ever must be “ accompanied by correspondent and commensurate duties ; “ and therefore they ought to remember, that the observance “ and breach of those duties are subjects not only of applause “ or censure from men, but of reward or punishment from “ God.”

“ and good fruits, without partiality, and  
 “ without hypocrisy<sup>m</sup>. ”

May it please God of his infinite mercy to  
 “ bring back into the way of truth, all such  
 “ as have ” so “ erred, and been so ” fatally  
 “ deceived ; ” may it please him to grant,  
 that “ his Church, being always preserved

“ God.” See *Parr's Fast Sermon*, 1804. These observations are just: Christianity affords us a security against the man as well as the monarch; Christianity must above all things tend to make the great good, and the mighty virtuous; Christianity must peculiarly tend to warn *him*, who *can do no wrong* in the sight of *man*, that in the sight of God he is as amenable as the lowest of his subjects, to the strictest laws of morality, truth, and justice. Christianity will teach the prince, that, however he may be raised above his fellows in this world, by the outward appendages of state and royalty, nothing will elevate him above the meanest of his vassals in the world to come, but virtue, and piety, and godliness of living. Let us never forget that Christianity, and Christianity alone, supplies us with *this mighty protection* against all evil rulers, in every description of political government. But let us not forget at the same time, that Christianity may *ennoble* the *man*, far beyond all the trappings and splendour, and titles and privileges, that distinguish the monarch: let us not forget, that, if the laws of the state enjoin us to honour the king, the laws of Christianity may oblige us to love the man: let us not forget, with such an example before us, as our own Throne at this moment exhibits, that if it is possible for the sceptred monarch to *dazzle* the *eyes* of his slaves and vassals, it is not less possible for the *Christian* king to *interest* the *hearts* of millions of faithful subjects!

<sup>m</sup> James iii. 15. 27.

“ from false teachers and false apostles, may  
“ be ordered and guided by faithful and true  
“ pastors ;” and may he “ give to all his  
“ people increase of grace, to hear meekly  
“ his word, and to receive it with pure af-  
“ fection, and to bring forth,” in the con-  
duct of their lives, “ the” blessed “ fruits”  
of his most Holy “ Spirit.”

T H E E N D.



















